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England

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A
HISTORY and DEFENCE
OF
MAGNA CHARTA.

CONTAINING
A COPY OF THE
ORIGINAL CHARTER at large,
WITH AN
ENGLISH TRANSLATION;

The Manner of its being obtained from

KING JOHN,

With its PRESERVATION and FINAL ESTABLISH-
MENT in the SUCCEEDING REIGNS;

WITH AN
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,

Containing a short Account of the Rise and Progress of National
Freedom, From the Invasion of *Cæsar* to the present Times.

Also the LIBERTIES which are confirmed by the

BILL OF RIGHTS, &c.

To which is added,

AN ESSAY ON PARLIAMENTS,

Describing their

ORIGIN IN ENGLAND,

And the extraordinary Means by which they have been
lengthened from half Yearly to Septennial ones.

L O N D O N.

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his Circulating-Library, near Exeter-Exchange, in the
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M.DCC.LXIX.

THE HISTORY OF THE

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INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

THOUGH it is very difficult to trace the first rudiments of the policy and laws established in England, yet we have the greatest reason to believe, that the natives, even in the earliest ages, were divided into small communities, in which a kind of democracy had the ascendant. CÆSAR, on his invasion of this island, seems to confirm this opinion in several passages of his commentaries, and expressly tells us, “ The chief command “ and administration of the war was, by “ the common council, bestowed on CAS- “ SIVELAN.” In emerging from a state of rudeness and simplicity, men generally act from that spirit of independance to which they have been accustomed. It is probable, therefore, that the old inhabitants had no monarch; but, upon any extraordinary
2 occasion,

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occasion, summoned a national meeting and chose a chief from among those who were the most distinguished for their abilities.

AFTER the Romans had withdrawn their protection, and the Britons were exposed to the insults of the Picts and Scots, they invited over the Anglo-Saxons; who soon after became their tyrants, and formed seven Saxon kingdoms upon the ruins of the conquered country. In consequence of this, the antient inhabitants were exterminated, or forced to seek an asylum in the inaccessible mountains. Their laws, manners, and language were abolished, and those of the Saxons were established in their stead. To the characters of conquerors these people were ambitious to add that of legislators: and there is very good reason to believe that many of the laws which remain in force even at this day, are the same which were brought from the northern parts of Germany by the Saxon invaders. Though the title of King was not used amongst them

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them, their chiefs assumed it, soon after their arrival in this island. In Saxony their governors were appointed by an assembly general of the nation, which was called WITENNAGEMOT, which, in the Saxon language, signifies the meeting of the wise men and which regulated all the important affairs of the state. When the Saxon conquests in England were divided into seven kingdoms, the monarchs being under a necessity of retaining great numbers of their own countrymen among their subjects, were cautious of exercising a despotic power, and therefore continued to hold the Witennagemot wherever the common interest of the people was concerned. From hence in some degree we are enabled to determine the nature of their constitution; as each kingdom of the Heptarchy had its sovereign, it was partly *monarchical*; as the King could not make laws without the consent of the principal men of the nation, it was, in some degree, *aristocratical*; and as the people, who held their lands of the nobles, were

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summoned to the general assembly, we have reason to suppose it was, in some measure, *democratical*. That the crown was *elective* seems probable from the distant branches of the royal family, often succeeding to the throne before those who were the nearest relations of the monarch.

DURING the dominion of these people, which lasted above six hundred years, the celebrated ALFRED formed a code of laws, that will, for ever, do the greatest honour to the memory of that amiable prince. Convinced that oppression naturally follows power; to screen the humble from the tyranny of the great, he instituted *trials by jury*; by which, in all criminal cases it was ordained, that twelve men should decide whether the accused person was guilty of the offence laid to his charge or not, and that the judge should pronounce sentence agreeably to their verdict. These twelve jurymen were chosen from amongst the peers of the delinquent. It is necessary to observe in

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in this place, that in England there are but two degrees or orders of men; viz. the peers of the realm and commoners. All dukes, marquisses, earls, viscounts, and barons are not only peers of the realm, but peers amongst themselves; so that the most inferior baron is the peer of the greatest duke. The rest of the people are called the commoners, without distinction, by which the poorest labourer is the peer of every one under the degree of a baron. The peers of the realm from this noble privilege, established or revived by King ALFRED, are judged by those of their own rank; that is, by the rest of the lords; and the commoners by *their* equals also. The only difference between the lords and commons in this matter, is, that *every* peer has a right to give his voice at the trial of any culprit, of the former denomination; and that twelve men only, are to acquit or condemn any person that is classed amongst the latter.

AFTER various revolutions, the seven kingdoms were reduced to one, the sceptre of
of

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of the Saxons passed into the hands of the Danes; and returned, in process of time, into the possession of the Saxons again.

DURING these affairs the English constitution, from the best accounts, appears to have suffered no little alteration; the nobles, by degrees, usurped an authority which the laws had not entitled them to; they limited the prerogative of the King; and invaded the rights of the people, so that the government in England continually approached towards an Aristocracy. The insolence of earl GOODWIN to EDWARD the Confessor probably occasioned that cautious monarch, who had good reason to suspect that the earl had intentions of aspiring to his crown, to invite over to his court WILLIAM of Normandy. This visit, furnished that enterprizing nobleman some years after with a pretence to inherit the throne; for on HAROLD's being nominated successor to King EDWARD, WILLIAM insisted that he had been promised the crown by the late King, and that HAROLD himself

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himself had taken an oath to assist him in obtaining it; and submitting his cause to the judgement of Pope ALEXANDER II. HAROLD was declared an usurper by that pontiff.

IN consequence of this decision, WILLIAM invaded England with a powerful army, and slew HAROLD in the memorable battle of Hastings; and, by that act, ended the government of the Saxons in England, two hundred and thirty seven years after the union of the Heptarchy, and six hundred and seventeen after the landing of HENGIST.

WILLIAM was so far from founding his title to the crown upon a *right of conquest*, that he took every method in his power to establish the opinion of his being *beir* to King EDWARD, from the particular appointment of that monarch, and when he was crowned, some time afterwards, the *people's consent* was obtained before he ascended the throne; and he even made a *compact* to insure the

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the *liberties* of his subjects, by swearing the same coronation oath which had usually been taken by the Saxon monarchs. Though he violated this engagement afterwards, and greatly oppressed and impoverished the people, yet the *constitution*, as an eminent writer observes, was not an absolute monarchy, but an engraftment of the feudal tenures and other Norman customs upon the antient Saxon laws of EDWARD the Confessor, which King WILLIAM not only swore to maintain, but confirmed afterwards in parliament.

THOUGH it must be allowed, that these laws were greatly altered, and produced a considerable change in power and property, yet they were agreed to, by the whole legislature, and the liberty of the subject was, in some respects, preserved; *The freemen*, says one of the statutes enacted in this reign, *shall hold and enjoy their land and possessions, free from all unjust exaction and tallage; and nothing shall be exacted from them, but their*
free

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free service, which they, by right, owe to the crown. This, by some learned writers, as it was confirmed to the people by the common council of the kingdom, is called the first MAGNA CHARTA of the Normans,

AFTER the death of the conqueror, who bequeathed the crown to his second son WILLIAM Rufus, the whole nation felt, in the severest manner, what heavy burthens the feudal laws by arbitrary constructions could impose upon the subject; and how the rights of the King and liberties of the people were infringed by the power of the nobility.

IT was from the reign of HENRY I. that we ought to derive the first regular settlement of the Anglo-Norman constitution; though the commons, till long after this time, were greatly overbalanced in power and property by the clergy and nobles, who, while they interposed between the crown and the people, incroached upon the rights of the latter so much, that despotism itself

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could

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could not be more oppressive, and the commonalty suffered all the evils of slavery under the appearance of freedom.

THE feudal government having degenerated into a system of tyranny in most parts of Europe, and the usurpations of the nobles having become unbounded and intolerable; the cities of Italy became impatient to shake off the yoke of their insolent lords; and about the beginning of the eleventh century, they united together, boldly assumed new privileges, and were roused by such a spirit of independance, that they formed themselves into corporate bodies; and, under pretence of recovering their antient property, took possession of the castles of the barons, and obliged those haughty lords to swear an oath of fidelity to them, and even become members of their community, and subject their estates to all taxes and fines imposed by the common consent of the people.

THIS

THIS revolution soon made its way into France, where Louis le Gros, in order to take away from the power of the nobility, conferred new privileges upon the inhabitants of that nation, and formed them into corporations, which relieved them from those arbitrary and grievous impositions, to which they had formerly been subjected, and they were governed by known and equal laws.

EVEN in the feudal system of policy no freeman could be governed or taxed, but by his own consent. It was natural, therefore, for the towns, who formerly depended for protection on the lords of whom they held, as soon as they were enfranchised, to be ambitious of acquiring all the rights essential to independency. In consequence of this, as they gained any degree of credit and influence, they insisted on the privilege of a decisive voice in enacting laws and granting subsidies.

THE happy effects of admitting the representatives of cities into the great council

of the nation, were soon very apparent. An intermediate power between the King and nobles was established; which, on some occasions, checked the usurpations of the one, and at other times opposed the encroachments of the other. It was not long before these new institutions were introduced into England. HENRY I. perceiving that the surest method to obtain the crown and set aside the pretensions of his elder brother ROBERT, would be to establish himself in the favour of the people, by procuring them such national benefits, as would make his interest that of the public; took every method to alleviate the heavy burthens which had become so insupportable to the lower rank of his subjects; he granted, to give liberty a more solid and lasting foundation, the outlines of that celebrated Charter which is the subject of the following sheets. A Charter in which the Saxon laws in use under EDWARD the Confessor, were restored to the people, and which annulled all evil customs, illegal exactions and unjust oppressions.

fions. The King and his subjects thus united together by this great instrument of mutual obligation; the conduct of that monarch, for some time, entirely agreed with the engagements he had made; he remitted a number of debts that were due to the crown, and redressed several grievances which the people complained of; by mitigating the most oppressive of the feudal laws, and punishing such persons as were enemies to the people, and had made themselves odious by an abuse of their power.

ON the accession of King STEPHEN, he acknowledged his being elected by the *consent* of the people: he granted them a Charter, in which he confirmed all their liberties, privileges, and immunities; and abolished all the laws relating to hunting and the forfeits which had been enacted since the conquest; and when he broke his compact, afterwards he involved himself in troubles that lasted during the greatest part of the his reign.

WE

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WE shall say nothing here of the grant of the Great Charter, which was obtained in the year one thousand two hundred and fifteen, from King JOHN, as that interesting circumstance is fully treated of in the following history. It would exceed the limits we have been obliged to prescribe to ourselves in this introductory essay to particularize the establishment of the parliament under EDWARD I. and the various changes it underwent, from the fraud of some, and the violence of others, till the reign of that unfortunate monarch, CHARLES; whose unhappy disputes with his commons in the year 1628, produced that spirited remonstrance, intitled the *petition of rights*, which was so called, because the drift of it was, not to desire of the King any grace or favour, but only the maintenance of the rights of the people.

THIS celebrated paper was presented by the commons, the second of June, 1628. and was drawn up in the following words:

To

“ *To the King's most excellent Majesty,*

“ HUMBLY shew unto our sovereign lord
 “ the King, the lords spiritual and tempo-
 “ ral, and commons in parliament assem-
 “ bled, that, whereas, it is declared and
 “ enacted by a statute, made in the time of
 “ the reign of King EDWARD I. commonly
 “ called *Statutum de Tallagio non conceden-*
 “ *do*, that no tallage or aid should be laid
 “ or levied, by the King or his heirs, in
 “ this realm, without the good will and
 “ assent of the archbishop, bishops, earls,
 “ barons, knights, burgesses, and other free-
 “ men of the commonalty of this realm:
 “ and by authority of parliament holden in
 “ the five and twentieth year of the reign
 “ of King EDWARD III. it is declared and
 “ enacted, that from henceforth, no per-
 “ son shall be compelled to make any loans
 “ to the King against his will, because such
 “ loans were against reason, and the fran-
 “ chise of the land; and by other laws of
 “ this realm it is provided, that none shall
 “ be

“ be charged by any charge or imposition,
“ called a benevolence, nor by such like
“ charge, by which the statutes before-men-
“ tioned, and other good laws and statutes
“ of this realm, your subjects have inherit-
“ ed this freedom, that they should not be
“ compelled to contribute to any tax, tallage,
“ aid, or other like charge, not set by com-
“ mon consent in parliament.

“ YET nevertheless, of late, divers com-
“ missions, directed to sundry commission-
“ ers in several counties with instructions,
“ have been issued, by means whereof,
“ your people have been, in divers places,
“ assembled, and required to lend certain
“ sums of money unto your majesty; and
“ many of them, upon their refusal so to do,
“ have had an oath administered unto them,
“ not warrantable by the laws and statutes
“ of this realm, and have been constrained
“ to become bound to make appearance,
“ and give attendance before your privy-
“ council and in other places, and others
of

“ of them have been therefore imprisoned,
 “ confined, and sundry other ways molef-
 “ ted and disquieted: and divers other
 “ charges have been laid and levied upon
 “ your people in several counties, by lord
 “ lieutenants, deputy lieutenants, commis-
 “ sioners for musters, justices of peace, and
 “ others, by command or direction from
 “ your majesty, or your privy-council,
 “ against the laws and free customs of the
 “ realm. And where, also, by the statute
 “ called, *The Great Charter of the liberties*
 “ *of England*; it is declared and enacted,
 “ That no freeman may be taken or im-
 “ prisoned, or be disseized of his freehold
 “ of liberties, or his free customs, or be
 “ outlawed or exiled, or in any manner des-
 “ troyed, but by lawful judgement of his
 “ peers, or by the law of the land.

“ AND in the eight and twentieth year
 “ of the reign of King EDWARD III. it was
 “ declared and enacted by authority of par-
 “ liament, That no man, of what estate

“ or condition that he be, should be put
“ out of his lands or tenements, nor taken,
“ nor imprisoned, nor disinherited, nor put
“ to death without being brought to answer
“ by due process of law.

“ NEVERTHELESS, against the tenour of
“ the said statutes, and other, the good
“ laws and statutes of your realm, to that
“ end provided, divers of your subjects have
“ of late been imprisoned, without any just
“ cause shewed; and when for their deliver-
“ ance they were brought before your jus-
“ tices, by your majesty's writs of Habeas
“ Corpus, there to undergo and receive as
“ the court should order, and their keepers
“ commanded to certify the causes of their
“ detainer; no cause was certified, but that
“ they were detained by your majesty's spe-
“ cial command, signified by the lords of
“ your privy council, and yet were returned
“ back to several prisons without being char-
“ ged with any thing to which they might
“ answer according to law.

“ AND

“ AND whereas of late great companies
 “ of soldiers and mariners have been disper-
 “ sed into divers counties of the realm, and
 “ the inhabitants against their wills have
 “ been compelled to receive them into their
 “ houses, and there to suffer them to so-
 “ journ, against the laws and customs of
 “ this realm, and to the great grievance and
 “ vexation of the people.

“ AND whereas also by authority of par-
 “ liament in the twenty fifth year of the
 “ reign of King EDWARD III. it is declared
 “ and enacted, that no man should be fore-
 “ judged of life or limb, against the form of
 “ the Great Charter, and the laws of the land,
 “ and by the said Great Charter, and other the
 “ laws and statutes of this your realm, no man
 “ ought to to be adjudged to death, but by
 “ the laws established in this your realm, ei-
 “ ther by the customs of the same realm or
 “ by acts of parliament: and whereas no
 “ offender of what kind soever is exempted
 “ from the proceedings to be used, and pu-
 nishments

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“ nishments to be inflicted by the laws and
“ statutes of this your realm; nevertheless
“ of late time, divers commissions under
“ your majesty's great seal have issued forth,
“ by which certain persons have been assign-
“ ed and appointed commissioners, with
“ power and authority to proceed within the
“ land, according to the justice of martial
“ law against such soldiers, and mariners,
“ or other dissolute persons joining with
“ them, as should commit any murder,
“ robbery, felony, mutiny, or other out-
“ rage or misdemeanor, whatsoever; and
“ by such summary course and order as is
“ agreeable to martial law, and as is used in
“ armies in time of war, to proceed to the
“ trial and condemnation of such offenders,
“ and them to cause to be executed and put
“ to death according to the law martial.

“ By pretext whereof some of your maje-
“ sty's subjects have been by some of the
“ said commissioners put to death; when and
“ where, if by the laws and statutes of the
land,

“ land, they had deserved death, by the same
 “ laws and statutes also they might, and by
 “ no other ought, to have been judged and
 “ executed.

“ And also sundry grievous offenders by
 “ colour thereof, claiming an exemption
 “ have escaped the punishments due to them
 “ by the laws and statutes of this your realm,
 “ by reason that divers of your officers and
 “ ministers of justice have unjustly refused
 “ or forborne to proceed against such offen-
 “ ders according to the same laws and sta-
 “ tutes, upon pretence that the said offen-
 “ ders were punishable only by martial laws
 “ and by authority of such commission as
 “ aforesaid; which commission and all others
 “ of like nature, are wholly and directly
 “ contrary to the said laws and statutes of
 “ this your realm.

“ THEY do therefore humbly pray your
 “ most excellent majesty that no man here-
 “ after be compelled to make or yield any
 “ gift,

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“ gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or such like
“ charge, without common consent by act of
“ parliament; and that none be called to
“ make answer, or take such oath, or to
“ give attendance, or be confined, or other-
“ wise molested or disquieted concerning the
“ same, or for refusal thereof: and that no
“ freeman in any such manner, as is before
“ mentioned, be imprisoned or detained:
“ and that your majesty would be pleased
“ to remove the said soldiers and mariners,
“ and that your people may not be so burthen-
“ ed in the time to come: and that the afore-
“ said commissions for proceeding by martial
“ law, may be revoked, and annulled; and
“ that hereafter, no commissions of like na-
“ ture, may issue forth to any person or per-
“ sons whatsoever, to be executed as afore-
“ said, lest by colour of them, any of your
“ majesty’s subjects be destroyed or put to death,
“ contrary to the laws and franchises of the land.

“ ALL which they most humbly pray of
“ your most excellent majesty, as their rights
“ and

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“ and liberties, according to the laws and
 “ statutes of this realm: and that your
 “ majesty would also vouchsafe to declare,
 “ that the awards, doings, and proceedings
 “ to the prejudice of your people in any of
 “ the premises, shall not be drawn here-
 “ after into consequence or example: and
 “ that your majesty would be also gracious-
 “ ly pleased, for the further comfort and
 “ safety of your people, to declare your
 “ royal will and pleasure, that in the things
 “ aforesaid, all your officers and ministers
 “ shall serve you according to the laws and
 “ statutes of this realm, as they tender the
 “ honour of your majesty and the prof-
 “ perity of this kingdom.”

THOUGH this petition had for its foundati-
 on, Magna Charta, six other statutes, and a
 great number of precedents, yet the King en-
 deavoured to evade the passing of it into a law,
 and when it was carried, he was so offended
 with the attempts of his people for an effect-
 ual redress of their grievances, that he ab-
ruptly

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ruptly dissolved the parliament, and never called another for twelve years afterwards.

IN 1640, after the people had made various applications to the monarch, in consequence of the principles of arbitrary power asserted by the court, having bred a general discontent, he summoned a parliament, which passed the celebrated triennial bill, providing that a parliament should be held every third year.

ON the debate upon this bill, lord DIGBY, observed, that it had been a maxim among the wisest legislators, that whoever means to settle good laws, must proceed in them, with a sinister opinion of all mankind; and suppose that whoever is not wicked, it is for want only of the opportunity. It is that opportunity of being ill, Mr. Speaker, said he, that we must take away, if ever we mean to be happy, which can never be done, but by the frequency of parliaments. No state can wisely be confident of any public minister's
continuing

continuing good, longer than the rod is over him. Surely therefore there is no man but will conclude with me, that as the deficiency of parliaments, hath been the *causa causarum* of all the mischiefs and distempers of the present times; so the frequency of them is the sole catholic antidote that can preserve and secure the future from the like.

THE unhappy divisions between this prince and his people, it is well known, at last terminated in a civil war, soon after which the King lost his life, the parliament seized upon the whole sovereign authority, and entirely subverted the constitution.

UPON the re-establishment of the government at the restoration, the power of the crown was greatly increased by the servility of the members of the house of commons, till the lords, joining with the King, in an attempt to annex the taking and settling the public accounts to the prerogative, they met with great opposition from the representa-

d

tives

tives of the people, who thought they had submitted to be fleeced in a most unmerciful manner, were not quite so tractable as to give up all their rights, but spiritedly voted the King's guards to be unconstitutional and passed the *Habeas Corpus* bill, which will always make their memory held in estimation by every lover of his country.

ABOUT this period, the house was divided into two parties, one of which was distinguished by the name of the *Court*, and the other by the title of the *Country*; the former, says sir WILLIAM TEMPLE, were grown numerous by a practice introduced about five years before this time, by the lord treasurer CLIFFORD, of downright buying off one man after another, as they could make the bargain. The country party still continued the majority, and retained more credit upon the corruption of the others, and their profession of adherence to the true interests of the nation, especially in the points of France, and popery. Where these came in question,
many

many of the court party voted with those of the country, who then carried all before them; but whenever the court appeared to fall in with the true interests of the nation, especially in those two points, then many of the country party meaning fairly, fell in with the court and carried the votes; as they soon did upon the King's pretence to grow bold with France, and resolve upon a war, if the peace was refused.

THE parliaments held afterwards in the reign of King CHARLES II. behaved with great spirit in passing the celebrated exclusion bill; and though the only parliament summoned by King JAMES, acted with rather too much submission, in granting him the revenues enjoyed by his brother, and depending upon his *word* for the security of the church of England, they never gave up the true interest of their country, since they steadfastly refused some time after to coincide with his arbitrary measures.

xxviii I N T R O D U C T O R Y

AT the glorious revolution the Bill of Rights further contributed to preserve the liberties of the people. The contents of this noble instrument are as follow:

“ I. THAT the pretended power of suspending of laws, or execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of parliament, is illegal.

“ II. THAT the pretended power of dispensing with laws or the execution of laws, by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal.

“ III. THAT the commission for erecting the late court of commissioners for ecclesiastical causes and all other commissioners and courts of the like nature, are illegal and pernicious.

“ IV. THAT the levying of money for or to the use of the crown, by pretence of prerogative, without grant of parliament,

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“ ment, for longer time, or in any other
“ manner than the same is, or shall be
“ granted, is illegal.

“ V. THAT it is the right of the sub-
“ jects to petition the King, and all com-
“ mitments and prosecutions for such peti-
“ tioning are illegal.

“ VI. THAT the raising or keeping a
“ standing army within the kingdom in time
“ of peace, unless it be with consent of par-
“ liament, is against law.

“ VII. THAT the subjects, which are
“ protestants, may have arms for their de-
“ fence, suitable to their condition, and as
“ allowed by law.

“ VIII. THAT election of members of
“ parliament ought to be free.

“ IX. THAT the freedom of speech, and
“ debates or proceedings in parliament,
“ ought

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“ ought not to be impeached or questioned,
“ in any court or place out of parliament

“ X. THAT excessive bail ought not to
“ be required, nor excessive fines imposed,
“ nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

“ XI. THAT jurors ought to be duly em-
“ pannelled and returned; and jurors, which
“ pass upon men in trial for high-treason,
“ ought to be freeholders.

“ XII. THAT all grants and promises,
“ of fines and forfeitures of particular per-
“ sons, before conviction, are illegal and
“ void.

“ XIII. AND that for redress of all grie-
“ vances, and for the amending, strengthen-
“ ing, and preserving of the laws, parlia-
“ ments ought to be held frequently.”

ANOTHER

D I S C O U R S E. xxx

ANOTHER popular bill, which passed in this reign, was that for limiting the duration of parliaments for three years ; as the people had suffered extremely during the long sitting of the house of commons in the former reigns, in which the triennial act passed by CHARLES I. had been repealed. To the proceedings of the house of commons at this time also, we owe our present happy situation, under the house of Hanover, the succession of which was established upon the following excellent conditions :

“ I. THAT all things relating to the well
“ governing of this kingdom, which are
“ properly cognizable in the privy-council,
“ shall be transacted there, and all resolutions
“ taken thereupon, shall be signed by the
“ Privy-council.

“ II. THAT no person whatsoever, that
“ is not a native of England, Scotland or
“ Ireland, or the dominions thereunto be-
“ longing; or who is not born of English pa-
“ rents

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“ rents beyond the seas, although such per-
“ sons be naturalized or made denizens,
“ shall be capable of any grant of lands, te-
“ nements, or hereditaments from the crown,
“ to himself, or any other in trust for him.

“ III. THAT upon the further limitation
“ of the crown, in case the same shall here-
“ after come to any person, not being a na-
“ tive of this kingdom of England, this na-
“ tion be not obliged to engage in any war
“ for the defence of any dominion, or ter-
“ ritories, not belonging to the crown of
“ England, without the consent of parlia-
“ ment,

“ IV. THAT whosoever shall hereafter
“ come to the possession of this crown, shall
“ join in communion with the church of En-
“ gland as by law established.

“ V. THAT no pardon be pleadable to
“ any impeachment in parliament.

“ VI. THAT

“VI. THAT no person who shall here-
 “after come to the possession of this crown,
 “shall go out of the dominions of England,
 “Scotland, or Ireland, without consent of
 “parliament.

“VII. THAT no person, who has any
 “office under the King, or receives a pen-
 “sion from the crown, shall be capable of
 “serving as a member of the house of com-
 “mons.

“VIII. THAT further Provisions be made,
 “for the confirming of all laws and statutes,
 “for the securing our religion and the rights
 “and liberties of the people.

“IX. THAT judges' commissions be
 “made *Quandiu se bene gesserint*, and their
 “salaries ascertained and established; but
 “upon the address of either house of par-
 “liament, it may be lawful to remove
 “them.

“X. THAT

“X. THAT the princess SOPHIA, dutch-
 “ess dowager of Hanover, be declared the
 “next in succession to the crown of Eng-
 “land, in the protestant line, after his ma-
 “jesty and the princess, and the heirs of
 “their bodies respectively; and that the
 “further limitation of the crown be to the
 “said princess SOPHIA and the heirs of her
 “body, being protestants.”

THE national meetings in Queen ANN's
 time, were replete with craft, faction, and
 perfidy; for though the honour of the Queen
 and the good of the public were loudly
 talked of, yet all was swallowed up in *self-*
interest; and clamour, cabal, and confusion
 prevailed.

ON the accession of King GEORGE I. the
 disorders of those times made it necessary to
 pass the *riot act*; which, as soon as tranqui-
 lity was restored, should certainly have been
 repealed; as it has since been attended with
 many fatal consequences, which are too re-
 cent

cent in the minds of the public, to need a recapitulation here. The Habeas Corpus act was at this time suspended, and the *obsequious* house of commons, to oblige the ministry, repealed the triennial bill, and *strange to tell* not only made all future parliaments *septennial*, but also enacted, that they themselves, who were chosen by their constituents for three years only, should *continue* representatives for seven.

THE speech of a worthy member in opposition to this step, is not undeserving the attention of our readers.

HE observed, that the right of electing representatives in parliament was inseparably inherent in the people of Great Britain, and could never be thought to be delegated to the representatives, unless they made the *elected* the *elector*, and at the same time, supposed it the will of the people, that their representatives should have it in their power to destroy those who made them, whenever a ministry

should think it necessary to screen themselves from their just resentments; that this would be to destroy the fence of all their freedom; for if they had a right to continue themselves one year, one month, or one day, beyond their triennial term, it will unavoidably follow, that they have it in their power to make themselves perpetual. He further observed, that to say, the passing of this bill, was not to grasp to themselves the right of election, but only to enlarge the time of calling new parliaments, was a manifest fallacy: for whenever the three years were expired, they could no longer be said to subsist by the *choice of the people*, but by their *own appointment*.

For these reasons, he thought the bill an *open violation* of the people's *liberties*; or to speak most mildly of it, a breach of the members trust, in that part which would most sensibly affect them; and of that ill tendency in its consequence, that as nothing but the security of the ministry could make it, at
that

that time, needful; so nothing but a standing force could make it lasting.

NOTWITHSTANDING the remonstrances of thirty lords who entered their protests against this bill, because, as they observed, frequent and new parliaments are required by the *fundamental laws* of the *constitution*, and that the bill, was, in their opinion, so far from preventing expences and corruptions that it would rather tend to increase them as the longer a parliament is to last, the more *valuable* a station in it must become. And the greater will be the danger of corrupting the members of it; yet this extraordinary bill on the question being put in the house of lords, was carried in the affirmative by ninety six votes against sixty one.

In consequence of this proceeding, various petitions were presented to the house of commons, from different parts of the kingdom, declaring that the people looked upon it, as an attempt to overturn the constitution.

The

xxxviii INTRODUCTORY

The bill, however, passed the commons, by two hundred and sixty-four, against one hundred and twenty-one, though the public had the greatest right to oppose it, both in behalf of themselves and their posterity.

ABOUT the year 1717, the monarchical mode of governing by *standing armies* was adopted by the house of commons, though great opposition was made to this step by the patriotic members.

AT the beginning of the reign of his late majesty in the year 1732, the famous excise scheme was brought into the house by Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, which striking at the very root of our liberties, raised such a tumult in the nation, that a number of petitions against the bill were presented to the house, from the city of London, Bristol, and most of the capital towns in the kingdom. This occasioned the measure to be dropped, on which the people expressed their satisfaction by the greatest transports of joy, and celebrated

brated their triumph by burning the minister in effigy.

A SHORT time after the accession of our present most gracious sovereign, the cyder tax occasioned a great clamour throughout the whole nation, it being look upon as partial and oppressive, and the means of collecting it, dangerous and unconstitutional. In consequence of this, the people instructed the representatives to oppose this scheme, and petition every branch of the legislature against it; notwithstanding this, the bill passed and occasioned great discontents amongst the people, and continued in full force till it was repealed by means of the popular ministry in the year 1766.

To investigate the merits of our present unhappy disputes with the Americans, and the contest between the administration and Mr. WILKES, would fill a considerable volume; but as the various grievances complained of by the people are enumerated in a concise

INTRODUCTORY

concise and spirited manner, in the petition of the freeholders of Middlesex, it may not be unnecessary to lay it, in this place, before our readers, especially as we have already presented them with copies of the most celebrated papers that have been written in the glorious cause of liberty.

To the King's most Excellent Majesty,
The HUMBLE PETITION of the FREEHOLDERS
of the COUNTY of MIDDLESEX.

Most Gracious Sovereign,
“ WE, your majesty's dutiful and loyal
“ subjects, the freeholders of the county of
“ Middlesex, beg leave, with all affection-
“ ate submission and humanity, to throw
“ ourselves at your royal feet, and humbly
“ to implore your paternal attention to those
“ grievances, of which this county and the
“ whole nation complain, and those fearful
“ apprehensions with which the whole Bri-
“ tish Empire is most justly alarmed,

“ WITH great grief and sorrow we have
“ long beheld the endeavours of certain evil
“ minded persons, who attempt to infuse
“ into

“ into your royal mind, notions and opin-
 “ ions of the most dangerous and pernicious
 “ tendency, and who promote and counsel
 “ such measures as cannot fail to destroy that
 “ harmony and confidence, which should
 “ ever subsist between a just and virtuous
 “ prince and a free and loyal people.

“ FOR this disaffected purpose, they have
 “ introduced into every part of the admini-
 “ stration of our happy, legal constitution, a
 “ certain unlimited and and indefinite discre-
 “ tionary power; to prevent which is the
 “ sole aim of all our laws, and was the sole
 “ cause of all those disturbances and revolu-
 “ tions, which formerly distracted this un-
 “ happy country; for our ancestors, by their
 “ own fatal experiences, well knew, that in
 “ a state, where discretion begins, law, li-
 “ berty, and safety end. Under the pre-
 “ tence of this discretion, or, as it was for-
 “ merly, and has been lately called — law of
 “ state — we have seen:

“ ENGLISH subjects, and even a member
 “ of the british legislature, arrested by virtue
 f “ of

“ of a general warrant, issued by a secretary
 “ of state, contrary to the law of the land :

“ THEIR houses rifled and plundered,
 “ their papers seized, and used as evidence
 “ upon trial :

“ THEIR bodies committed to close im-
 “ prisonment:

“ THE Habeas Corpus eluded :

“ TRIAL by jury discountenanced, and
 “ the first law-officer of the crown publicly
 “ insinuating that juries are not to be trusted :

“ PRINTERS punished by the ministry in
 “ the supreme court without a trial by their
 “ equals — without any trial at all :

“ THE remedy of the law for false im-
 “ prisonment barred and defeated :

“ THE plaintiff and his attorney, for their
 “ appeal to the law of the land, punished
 by

DISCOURSE. xliii

“ by expences and imprisonment, and made,
“ by forced engagements, to desist from
“ their legal claim :

“ A WRITING determined to be a libel
“ by a court where it was not cognizable in
“ the first instance, contrary to law, because
“ all appeal is thereby cut off, and inferior
“ courts and juries influenced by such pre-
“ determination :

“ A PERSON condemned in the said court
“ as the author of the supposed libel unheard
“ without defence or trial :

“ UNJUST treatment of petitions, by se-
“ lecting only such parts as might be wrested
“ to criminate the petitioner, and refusing to
“ hear those which might procure him re-
“ dress :

“ THE thanks of one branch of the legi-
“ slature proposed by a minister to be given
“ to an acknowledged offender for his of-

“ fence, with the declared intention of screen-
 “ ing him from law :

“ ATTACHMENTS wrested from their ori-
 “ ginal intent of removing obstructions to the
 “ proceedings of law, to punish, by sentence
 “ of arbitrary fine and imprisonment, with-
 “ out trial or appeal, supposed offences com-
 “ mitted out of court :

“ PERPETUAL imprisonment of an En-
 “ glishman without trial, conviction, or
 “ sentence, by the same mode of attachment,
 “ wherein the same person is at once party,
 “ accuser, judge, and jury :

“ INSTEAD of the antient and legal civil
 “ police, the military introduced at every
 “ opportunity, unnecessarily and unlawfully
 “ patrolling the streets, to the alarm and ter-
 “ ror of the inhabitants :

“ THE lives of many of your majesty’s in-
 “ nocent subjects destroyed by military exe-
 “ cution :

“ SUCH

D I S C O U R S E. xlv

“ SUCH military execution solemnly ad-
“ judged to be legal:

“ MURDER abetted, encouraged, and re-
“ warded:

“ THE civil magistracy rendered con-
“ temptible by the appointment of improper
“ and incapable persons:

“ THE civil magistrates tampered with by
“ administration, and neglecting and refusing
“ to discharge their duty:

“ MOBS and rioters hired and raised by the
“ ministry, in order to justify and recom-
“ mend their own illegal proceedings, and
“ to prejudice your majesty's mind by false
“ insinuations against the loyalty of your
“ majesty's subjects.

“ THE freedom of election violated by cor-
“ rupt and undue influence, by unpunished
“ violence and murder:

“ THE

“ THE just verdicts of juries, and the opi-
 “ nion of the judges, over-ruled by false re-
 “ presentations to your majesty; and the de-
 “ terminations of the law set aside, by new,
 “ unprecedented, and dangerous means;
 “ thereby leaving the guilty without restrain,
 “ and the injured without redress, and the
 “ lives of your majesty’s subjects at the mercy
 “ of every ruffian protected by administra-
 “ tion:

“ OBSOLETE and vexatious claims of the
 “ crown set on foot for partial and election
 “ purposes:

“ PARTIAL attacks on the liberty of the
 “ press: the most daring and pernicious li-
 “ bels against the constitution, and against
 “ the liberty of the subject, being allowed
 “ to pass unnoticed, whilst the slightest libel
 “ against a minister is punished with the ut-
 “ most rigour:

“ WICKED

D I S C O U R S E. xlvii

“ WICKED attempts to increase and establish a standing army, by endeavouring to vest in the crown an unlimited power over the militia; which, should they succeed, must, sooner or later, subvert the constitution, by augmenting the power of administration in proportion to their delinquency:

“ REPEATED endeavours to diminish the importance of members of parliament individually, in order to render them more dependent on administration collectively. Even threats having been employed by ministers to suppress the freedom of debate; and the wrath of parliament denounced against measures authorized by the law of the land:

“ RESOLUTIONS of one branch of the legislature, set up as the law of the land, being a direct usurpation of the rights of the two other branches, and therefore a manifest infringement of the constitution:

“ PUBLIC

xlviiii INTRODUCTION

“ PUBLIC money shamefully squandered
“ and unaccounted for, and all inquiry into
“ the cause of arrears in the civil list pre-
“ vented by the ministry:

“ INQUIRY into a pay-master's public ac-
“ counts stopped in the exchequer, though
“ the sums unaccounted for by that pay-mas-
“ ter, amount to above forty millions ster-
“ ling:

“ PUBLIC loans perverted to private mi-
“ nisterial purposes:

“ PROSTITUTION of public honours and
“ rewards to men who can neither plead pu-
“ blic virtue nor services:

“ IRRELIGION and immortality, so emi-
“ nently discountenanced by your majesty's
“ royal example, encouraged by administra-
“ tion both by example and precept:

“ THE

“ THE same discretion has been extended
 “ by the same evil counsellors to your ma-
 “ jesty’s dominions in America, and has pro-
 “ duced to our suffering fellow subjects in
 “ that part of the world, grievances and ap-
 “ prehensions similar to those of which we
 “ complain at home.

“ *Most Gracious Sovereign,*

“ SUCH are the grievances and apprehen-
 “ sions which have long discontented and
 “ disturbed the greatest and best part of your
 “ majesty’s loyal subjects. Unwilling, how-
 “ ever, to interrupt your royal repose,
 “ though ready to lay down our lives and
 “ fortunes for your majesty’s service, and for
 “ the constitution as by law established, we
 “ have waited patiently, expecting a consti-
 “ tutional remedy by the means of our own
 “ representatives: but our legal and free
 “ choice having been repeatedly rejected,
 “ and the right of election now finally taken
 “ from us by the unprecedented seating of a
 “ candidate who was never chosen by the
 “ county,

“ county, and who, even to become a can-
“ didate, was obliged, fraudulently, to vacate
“ his seat in parliament, under the pretence
“ of an insignificant place, invited thereto by
“ the prior declaration of a minister, that
“ whoever opposed our choice, though but
“ with four votes, should be declared mem-
“ ber for the county. We see ourselves,
“ even by this last act, deprived even of the
“ franchises of Englishmen, reduced to the
“ most abject state of slavery, and left with-
“ out hopes or means of redress but from your
“ majesty or God.

“ DEIGN then, Most Gracious Sovereign,
“ to listen to the prayer of the most faithful
“ of your Majesty’s subjects; and to banish
“ from your royal favour, trust, and confi-
“ dence, for ever, those evil and pernicious
“ counsellors, who have endeavoured to
“ alienate the affection of your Majesty’s
“ most sincere and dutiful subjects, and
“ whose suggestions tend to deprive your
“ people of their dearest and most essential
“ rights,

DISCOURSE. lxi

“ rights, and who have traiterously dared to
“ depart from the spirit and letter of those
“ laws which have secured the crown of
“ these realms to the house of Brunswick;
“ in which we make our most earnest pray-
“ ers to God, that it may continue untarnish-
“ ed to the latest posterity.”

(Copy)

Signed by

1565 Freeholders.

WE shall now dismiss this discourse, with our sincere wishes, that a speedy end may be put to the present national divisions, and that the vigour of the British constitution may remain unimpaired to the latest posterity, earnestly recommending to *those whom it may concern*, the two following excellent observations from Sir William Temple's essays:

“ THE first safety of princes and states, lies
“ in avoiding all councils, or designs of inno-
“ vation, in antient and established forms and
“ laws,

“ laws, especially those concerning liberty,
 “ property, and religion, which are the pos-
 “ sessions men will ever have most at heart,
 “ and thereby leaving the channel of known
 “ and common justice clear and undisturbed.

“ THE second, in pursuing the true and
 “ common interest of the nation they govern,
 “ with out espousing those of any party or
 “ faction; or if these are so formed in a state,
 “ that they must incline to one or other, then
 “ to chuse and favour that which is most
 “ popular, or wherein the greatest or strong-
 “ est part of the people appear to be en-
 “ gaged. For as the end of government
 “ seems to be *Salus populi*, the safety or wel-
 “ fare of the people; so the strength of the
 “ government is the consent of the people
 “ which made that maxim of *Vox populi*,
 “ *Vox Dei*: That is, THE GOVERNORS,
 “ WHO ARE FEW, WILL EVER BE FOR-
 “ CED TO FOLLOW THE STRENGTH
 “ OF THE GOVERNED, WHO ARE MA-
 “ NY.”

A HISTORY



A

HISTORY and DEFENCE

O F

MAGNA CHARTA.

HE that would animate mankind to the support of freedom, which is their common cause, should himself feel in an eminent degree, that ardour which he wishes to inspire. Even an enthusiasm therein may be deemed a holy rapture, since that by which it is produced is the cause of God; and is so great a good to the first order in his creation.

B

THIS

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 “ sessions men will ever have most at heart,
 “ and thereby leaving the channel of known
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B

THIS

2 HISTORY OF

THIS being premised, suffer me, my dear friends and fellow citizens, to intreat you to let your sons succeed to that liberty which you have so comfortably enjoyed—for which your fathers have fought, with so much ardour, and with so much glory.—For which they sustained so many labours, so much grief, such multitudes of dangers, under the heavy hands of subtile priests, and of evil kings.

THEY sped in all these toilsome warfares. And how could they have failed? The nerves of men in a cause so noble are endued with double vigour. The general ardour is derived to each, because,

“ When men, for this, assault a throne,

“ Each adds the common welfare to his own;

“ And each unconquer’d heart the strength of all acquires.”

WE have lived to see the most valuable part of the charter of our most sacred rights daringly invaded—but we will not live to see it destroyed. The wounds by which it falls shall first reach our hearts, and the rich torrents of our blood be shed as a libation on the pile of expiring freedom.

LET us preserve the Great Charter of our liberties with the same firmness as that by which it was obtained, and by which it has been preserved

MAGNA CHARTA. 3

to us against the repeated attacks of wicked and abandoned traitors, and this is only to be done by the firmness and intrepidity of Englishmen.

BUT, that my countrymen may learn thoroughly to understand the value of their birthright, I shall give the history of MAGNA CHARTA, together with a defence of it, in the homely language of an honest man, against the aspersions thrown on it by LAUD and many others, and now revived by those who are the enemies of our liberties, and are therefore the enemies of our peace.

IN order to this I shall first shew, That Magna Charta is much elder than K. JOHN's time, and consequently that its birth cannot be blemished with any thing that was done in his reign, though his confirmation of it had been really extorted by rebellion. Secondly, That the confirmations which were had and procured to it in K. JOHN's and HENRY the third's time, were far from being gained by rebellion.

FIRST, The contents of Magna Charta is the undoubted inheritance of England, being *their antient and approved laws*; so antient, that they seem to be of the same standing with

4 HISTORY OF

the nation; and so well approved, that FORTESCUE*, applauding our laws, triumphs in this, That they passed through all the British, Roman, Danish, Saxon, and Norman times, with little or no alteration in the main. Now, says he, if they had not been liked by these people, they would have been altered. Accordingly, in this last Norman revolution K. WILLIAM I. (falsely and flatteringly called the conqueror) swore to the inviolable observation of them under this title of "The good, antient, and approved laws of the " realm," and particularly and by name, K. EDWARD's laws. So antient is the matter and substance of Magna Charta.

SECONDLY, Nor was the manner and form of granting these laws by charter, or under hand and seal, with the confirmation of an oath over and above the coronation-oath, any new invention or innovation at all; for as WILLIAM I. began it, so I am sure that HENRY I. and K. STEPHEN, and HENRY II. did the same before: and therefore if the obscure birth of Magna Charta was in K. JOHN's time, it was then born with a

* *De Laud, Leg. Ang.*

grey beard, for it was in being in his great grandfather's reign.

For, thirdly, That very charter of his great grandfather HENRY I. was the ground and reason of the parliament's insisting upon having the like confirmation of their liberties by K. JOHN, and was the copy by which they went. For though K. JOHN, at his absolution at Winchester* from the pope's sentence and excommunication, had solemnly sworn to restore the good laws of his predecessors, and particularly those of K. EDWARD; and though presently after, at a parliament at St. Alban's, the laws of K. HENRY I. were ordained to be observed throughout all England, and all bad laws to be abolished: yet, contrary to both these late engagements, he was marching an army in all haste to fall upon several of his barons, who had lately failed in following him in an intended expedition into France. But the archbishop stopped him in his career, by following him to Northampton, and there telling him that it would be a breach of his oath at his late absolution, to make war upon his subjects with-

* A. D. 1213, Reg. 15.

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out judgment in parliament. The King huffed him, and told him, " That this was lay business, " and that he would not delay business of the " kingdom for him;" and by break of day, next morning, marched hastily towards Nottingham. The archbishop still followed him, assuring him that he would excommunicate all his followers, if they proceeded any farther in this hostile way; and never left him till he had set a day for a parliament, that the barons might there answer it.

THIS parliament was held at London, in St. Paul's church; where, before it ended, the archbishop took some of the lords apart, and put them in mind how he made the king swear at Winchester to restore the good laws of King EDWARD, and cause them to be observed by all the realm. And now, says he, there is likewise found a certain charter of HENRY I. King of England, by which, if you please, you may be able to restore your long lost liberties to their former state and condition; and, producing the charter, he caused it to be read all over in their hearing: which the lords having heard and understood, were overjoyed, and swore in the presence of the archbishop, " That when they saw it convenient for their liberties, if need were, they would spend their
" lives."

“lives.” The archbishop, for his part, promised them his most faithful aid and assistance to the utmost of his power; and after this association was thus entered into, the parliament broke up.

THERE had passed but one hundred and thirteen years since the grant of HENRY the first’s charter: and, though there were then made as many charters as there were shires (directed to the sheriff of every county to proclaim them, for this is directed to HUGH DE BOCLAND, sheriff of Herefordshire) and, by the king’s express order, were to be laid up in the abbies of the several counties for a monument; yet, because the thing was beyond the memory of man, and that age not very conversant with book-learning or records, it seems not to be known to them; and the archbishop says, “*Inventa est quoque nunc charta quædam*” HEN. I. But, when the lords had once seen it, they were so fond of it, that they got it from the archbishop: and the next year, about Michaelmas, when the King was returning out of France, the earls and barons met at St. Edmund’s bury, it might be thought for devotion, but it was to consult about their liberties; and there the charter of HENRY I. which contained their laws and liberties was again produced and treated of
among

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among them. After which they all went to the high altar, and there swore in order, beginning at the greatest, "That, if the King should refuse to confirm by his charter the said laws and liberties (being the rights of the kingdom) they would make war upon him till he did." And likewise at last by common consent they came to this resolution, "That they would go together to the King after Christmas, and desire him to confirm the said liberties. And, in the mean time, that they would make such provision of horses and arms; that, in case the king should start from his late oath, wherein he promised it (which they had too much reason to believe, because of his doubleness) they might then compel him to performance by seizing his castles."

ACCORDINGLY, after Christmas they came to the King in a gay military habit, and desired the confirmation of their antient liberties, as they were contained in writing in the charter of HENRY I. and the laws of K. EDWARD. They affirmed likewise, that by his oath at Winchester, he had promised those laws and liberties, and that he was already bound to keep them by his own oath. The king seeing the constancy and resolution

MAGNA CHARTA. 9

lution of the barons in their demand, did not think fit to deny them, but desired respite and time to consider of it, being a weighty business, till after Easter; and after several proposals on both sides, the King very unwillingly set a day, and the archbishop, bishop of Ely, and lord marshal were his sureties, that then they should all of them have satisfaction given them in reason. Upon this the lords went home. But the King in the mean time, by way of precaution, caused the whole realm to swear fealty to him alone against all men, and to renew their homages. And as a farther security and protection, more than out of devotion, at Candlemas following he took upon him the cross.

In Easter-week the forementioned lords met at Stanford, who now had drawn together in favour of them almost all the nobility and principal gentry of England: so that they amounted to a numerous army; and the sooner, because K. JOHN had rendered himself universally hated. In this retinue were two thousand knights, besides all others of lower rank, horse and foot diversly armed. The King was then at Oxford expecting the coming of the parliament. On the Monday following these associated barons came to Brackley;

C

which,

which, when the King understood, he sent to them the archbishop, the lord marshal, earl of Pembroke, and several other sage persons, to know what were the laws and liberties they required; which they presently delivered in a schedule to those that came from the King, affirming, That if he would not forthwith confirm them under his seal, they would compel him, by seizing his castles, lands, and possessions, till he gave them competent satisfaction in the premises. Then the archbishop, with the rest of his company, carrying this schedule to the king, rehearsed all the chapters or heads of it before him memoriter. But when the King understood the purport of it, he laughed and said with the utmost indignation and scorn, "And why do not the barons, together with these unjust demands, demand my kingdom? The things they ask," said he, "are idle and superstitious, and not supported by any title or pretence of reason." And at length, in a great rage he affirmed with an oath, that he would never grant them such liberties, whereby he himself should be made a servant.

WHEN, therefore, the archbishop and earl of Pembroke could, in no wise, gain the King's consent to these liberties, by his command they returned

returned to the barons, and there reported just what the King had said in order. Whereupon the barons presently chose them a general, and flew to their arms, and marched directly to Northampton to seize that castle. But having spent fifteen days in that fruitless attempt, having no petards nor other warlike instruments to carry on a siege, somewhat abashed with this disappointment, they marched to Bedford, where they were kindly received; and by messengers sent to them from the principal citizens, were invited to London. When they were come thither, they sent letters to all the earls, barons, and knights, that as yet seemed to adhere to the King, though it were but feignedly; that as they tendered their estates, they should leave a perjured King, and come and join them; and effectually engage with them for the liberties and peace of the realm: otherwise, they threatened to treat them as public enemies. Upon which, most of the lords, who had not as yet sworn to the said liberties, wholly leaving the King, came to London, and there associated with the barons.

KING JOHN, seeing himself thus generally forsaken, so that he had hardly seven knights remaining with him, and fearing, lest the barons

should insult his camp, which they might easily have done without opposition, he betook himself to fraud and dissembling, pretending peace, when he had immortal war in his heart, resolving hereafter to oppress the barons singly, whom he could not all at once. He therefore sends to them the earl of Pembroke and other persons of credit with this message, "That for the benefit of peace, and for the advancement and honour of his realm, he would willingly grant them the laws and liberties which they desired," leaving to the barons to appoint a convenient time and place for the performance. They very gladly set the King a day, to meet June 15, at Running-mead, betwixt Stanes and Windsor, an antient place for the meeting of parliaments.

THE King and the lords accordingly met, and their parties sitting asunder, and keeping to their own side, treated of the peace and the liberties a good while. There were present, as it were of the King's party, the archbishop, and about thirty principal persons more, whom Matthew Paris names; but, says he, they that were on the barons' side were past reckoning, seeing the whole nobility of England gathered together in a body seemed not to fall under number. At length, after they had

had treated in several forts, the King seeing the barons were too powerful for him, made no difficulty to grant them the laws and liberties underwritten, and to confirm them in his charter in this manner.

HERE follows Magna Charta in Matthew Paris*. And because there was not room for the liberties and free customs of the forest in the same parchment, they were contained in another charter, De Foresta. And then follows the security for them both.

AFTER this, the King sent his letters patent to all the sheriffs in England, to cause all persons, of what condition soever, to swear, That they would observe these aforesaid laws and liberties, and to the utmost of their power, distress the King by seizing his castles, and otherwise straiten him to the execution and performance of all things contained in the charter. At last, the parliament being ended, the barons returned to London with their charters.

THUS have I given you a short view of the noble conduct of the barons in their manner of obtaining the confirmation of their charter from

* P. 255. Which is here given at the end of the History.

K. JOHN. The restitution of Magna Charta you may call it, for the birth of it you see it was not. What I have recited is undoubted history and record, and clear matter of fact. And I have confined myself only to these three last years, in which the barons were in pursuit of this business, and took the quickest steps towards it: and above all, were put into a right method by the advice of STEPHEN LANGTON, the archbishop, to claim their estate with the writings of it in their hand. For above a dozen years before, in the third of this King's reign upon a summon of his to the earls and barons to attend him with horse and arms into Normandy, they held a conference together at Leicester, and by general consent they sent him word, "That unless he would render them their rights and liberties, they would not attend him out of the kingdom." But that impotent demand of their liberties, by the by, did them no good, but exposed them to still more and more intolerable oppressions. They should have gone to him *according to their summons*, they should not have *sent*. Not to mention that his faith was plighted by the archbishop HUBERT, WILLIAM lord marshal earl of PEMBROKE, GEOFFREY FITZ-PETER, chief justiciary of England, (whom he sent as his commissioners to proclaim

claim and keep the peace immediately after the death of his brother RICHARD) "That the earl, " JOHN would restore all men their rights."

THIS was done at an assembly of the peers at Northampton, before his coming out of Normandy to be crowned. "Sub tali igitur conventionione comites & barones comiti JOHANNI fidelitatem contra omnes homines juraverunt." Upon these terms, and no otherwise, the barons swore fealty to him: which made K. JOHN so much rejoice at GEOFFREY FITZ-PETER's death, and swear, "That then, and not before, he was " king and lord of England." For, from thenceforward, says PARIS, he was more at liberty to contravene his oaths and covenants, which with this GEOFFREY he had made sore against his will; and loose himself from the bonds of the peace he had entered into. Now these pacts and covenants are clearly that before his coronation, which I have just now recited, and at this parliament at St. Alban's, anno 1213, not a year before this great man's death. Where the King's peace was publicly declared to all his people; and it was strictly commanded, on the King's behalf, "That " the laws of his great grandfather, HENRY I, " should be kept by the whole realm, and all un-
" just

"just laws abolished." In both these affairs he transacted for the king, having in this last, together with the bishop of Winchester, the government of the kingdom committed to him, the King being then absent, on his way to France.

Thus the barons at last have their long lost rights restored and confirmed, to the universal joy of the nation: but this is soon overcast. For King JOHN immediately resolves to undo all that he had done, being prompted thereto, not only by his own arbitrary and tyrannical disposition, but also by his foreign mercenaries, whom he had long made his favourites and confidants, while he looked upon his own natural subjects as abjects. The Flanders Ruyters, or cavaliers, who now by Magna Charta were expressly, and by name, ordered to be expelled the kingdom, as a nuisance to the realm; these being grown his saucy familiars, so followed him with derision and reproaches, "For unkinging himself by these concessions, "and making himself a cypher, and our sovereign "lord of no dominions, a slave to his subjects," and the like, that they made him stark mad: and being given over to rage and revenge, he privately retires to the Isle of Wight, where, as PARIS says, he provides himself of St. Peter's

two swords. He sends to the pope, whom he bribes with a large sum of money, besides his former surrender of the kingdom, to cancel and annul Magna Charta, and to confound it with his apostolical authority; and withal, to excommunicate the barons for it: and at the same time he sends the bishop of Worcester lord chancellor of England, the bishop of Norwich, and several other persons, to all the neighbouring countries, to gather together all the foreign forces they could, by promises of lands and possessions; and if need were, to make them grants under the great seal, and to bring them all to Dover by Michaelmas.

THIS three months he spent incognito, in and about the Isle of Wight, coasting and skulking about, and some times exercising piracy out at sea; so that it was not then known where he was, nor what was become of him; but thus he whiled away the time, contemplating his treason, and waiting for the incomprehensible enemy-friends he had sent for. I know not whether this desertion, and not providing for the government in his absence, and sending the great seal of England, upon such an errand, out of the realm, may not, with some men, amount to a modern abdication: but I am sure that this, which fol-

lows, is enough to justify the expulsion of a whole race of Tarquins. After Michaelmas he sailed to Dover to meet his outlandish scum, with which he invades his own kingdom. Such an execrable desperate crew never set foot upon English ground, so fitted for mischief, and that thirsted after nothing more than human blood, whom his agents had drawn together out of Poictou, Gascony, Lovain, Brabant, Flanders, and weeded all the neighbouring continent for them. These made up a vast army, notwithstanding the shipwreck of HUGH DE BOVES, who was bringing forty thousand more, besides women and children, who all perished in a storm betwixt Calais and Dover. This freight of women and children, several of whom were afterwards driven ashore in their cradles, were intended to plant the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, after the extirpation of the English; for it is said, that this HUGH had a charter of inheritance given him of these two provinces.

BUT with these forces he had, he overrun England and wasted it with fire and sword in such a manner, as no Englishman can read the history of it without being in pain and torment. There is such a scene in Matt. Paris, p. 276. as was never
seen

seen again, unless in the French and Irish massacres: it looks like hell broke loose. For these Satellites Satanæ, the Devil's life-guard, as Matt. Paris calls them, seemed to have premeditated malice against mankind; and being led on "a cru-
 "deli rege, imò cruento tyranno," by a cruel King, nay, it was a bloody tyrant; no furies could put innocent people in cold blood, of all ages and conditions, to more exquisite tortures, nor sport themselves more in making havoc and desolation than they did. And with this horrid ravage he over-run England, and proceeded as far as Berwick in half a year's time; all the castles of the barons falling to him, either surrendered, or for the most part abandoned.

IN the mean time, most of the barons were at London, where we left them, making holiday for the grant of Magna Charta, and pleasing themselves; that after so long oppression and Ægyptian bondage, the liberties of England were restored again in their days. They thought, likewise, that God had touched the King's heart, and he was become a new man, and meant the good faith he had sworn; and flattered themselves that he would, from henceforward, inviolably observe their charters. But they were interrupted

in this thought by the private intelligence they had, that he had given orders to his foreigners, in whom his soul trusted, to fortify and furnish his castles with men and provisions, and to store them with all manner of artillery; but to do it so warily, that it might not come to the knowledge of the barons. This boded no good; for here was Magna Charta concerning the expulsion of foreigners broken already: and therefore, some of the barons went to the King at Windsor, to know more of this matter, and to try, by gentle and wholesome advice, to bring him to a better mind. He received them with a blithe countenance, and thereby palliated the inward venom; and swearing by God's feet, he assured them, that he had no ill purpose, and bantered and laughed them out of their story. Nevertheless, before they left him, they gathered such marks of his aversion to them, and that all was not well, that they went back to London lamenting, and saying, "Woe to us and to all England, which
 "wants a King that will speak truth, and is
 "oppressed by a false underhand tyrant, that uses
 "his utmost endeavours to subvert a miserable
 "kingdom."

THE very night after this conference with the barons, it was, that he stole away from Windsor to the Isle of Wight, and there laid his hellish plot against the nation: which was so deep, that it did not enter into the hearts of the barons to suspect or imagine. They had now recovered the rights of the nation, which was nothing but their own, and had been most unjustly detained from them; and they never intended to have, nor sought for, more. But, because the King went away in a bad mind, and because they had certain notice that nothing but their departure from London was wanted in order to surprize it; they therefore adjourned their tournament, which they had before appointed on the Monday after the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul at Stanford, to be held the Monday sevennight after at Hounslow, near London, both for the safety of the city and their own. This they certified in their letter to WILLIAM ALBINET, who was gone down to his castle of Beauvoir, and withal desired him by all means to make one at it, and to come up well provided with horses and arms, that he might win honour. For he who performed best was to have a bear, which a certain lady would send to the tournament. With such frivolous and idle actions, says Matthew Paris,

Paris, did they entertain themselves; little knowing what cunning snares were laid for them.

STILL they remained at London; and, for want of better employment, spent their time yet more vainly, in eating and drinking, and sitting up all night at the expensive dye, which however does not look like plotting; for, if they had been so minded, it had been easy for them, in the King's absence, to have taken very great advantages against him. But they, meaning no hurt, had reason to expect none; and therefore the invasion after Michaelmas fell suddenly upon them like a tempest or HUGH DE BOVES's storm. And being wholly unprovided to resist such an inundation as this, they thought the best way to put some stop to it, would be by presently throwing in a good garrison into the castle of Rochester, that the King might not come immediately to besiege London. Accordingly they make choice of WILLIAM D'ALBINET who was just come from his own castle, and a noble band of seven-score knights with their retinue for this service. When they came thither, they found nothing but bare walls, neither provision, nor arms, nor any thing but what they had brought along with them; insomuch that many of the noblemen repented their coming down,

down, and would have returned: but WILLIAM D'ALBINET over-persuaded them to stay, and told them it would be dishonourable to desert what they had undertaken. They therefore got together what provision they could out of the town in that short space, for within three days the King and his army were with them, and had blocked them up. There they behaved themselves like great men; but the siege lasting long, they were so straitened for provisions, that they were forced at last to eat their horses. Being thus in distress, the barons at London, though with the latest, remembered their oath, to relieve them in case they were besieged, and marched out with a pompous army as far as Dartford; but there the gentle south-wind met them, and blew in their faces and though it used not to be troublesome to any body else, yet it drove them back, as if it had been drawn swords, to their known den at London. This scoffing reason is all that Matthew Paris will give for their shameful retreat, and deserting their companions; but no doubt, it was some panic fright from the reports of the country, concerning the numbers and condition of the King's army: for he himself elsewhere tells us, That they were such as struck a terror into every body that beheld them. This piece of cowardice
makes

makes the King insult, and push on the siege with the greater fury, which only lost him the more men: for they defended themselves to a miracle, and lost but one knight during the whole siege. But at last their provision failed them; and, when they had not one morsel left, on St. Andrew's day, they all went out and surrendered themselves to mercy. The King immediately ordered them, barons and all, to be hanged up. But in this, SAVARICUS DE MALLOLEONE, who was himself a nobleman, withstood him to the face, and told him, that as yet, it was but a young war, and no body knew what the chances of it might be: it might be his hap, or any nobleman's else, to fall into the hands of the barons, who would be taught, by this example of his, how to use them; and that no body would serve him upon those terms. With much ado the King yielded to his advice, though it was likewise the opinion of all the wisest about him: and so he sent WILLIAM ALBINET, and many others to be kept close prisoners in Corf castle, others to Nottingham and other prisons, but gratified his cruelty in hanging up their servants.

ONE day, during this siege, the King and SAVARIC were viewing the castle, to discover
where

where it was weakest. The best marksman that WILLIAM D'ALBINET had, knew him, and said, "My lord, may it please you, shall I now kill the King, our bloody enemy, with this dart, which I have here ready?" "No, no," says he, "you wicked glutton; God forbid that we should procure the death of the LORD's anointed!" Says the other, "If it were your case, he would not spare you." Says WILLIAM, "God's will be done, God shall dispose of that, not I." Herein, says Matthew Paris, he was like DAVID sparing SAUL, when he could have killed him. This passage was not unknown to the King, and yet, for all that, he would not spare him when he was his captive, but would have hanged him if he had been suffered to do it.

AFTER the siege of Rochester castle, where the flower of the barons was lost, King JOHN, notwithstanding, did not think fit to attempt London (where, though the barons did not judge themselves able to take the field, yet were desperately resolved to live and die together) but he marched to St. Alban's, and the 20th of December divided his army into two; one of which he himself led to lay waste with fire and sword northwards; the other he left to do as much for all

the neighbouring counties about London, and to be sure to keep that place blocked up. He, with his army, lay the first night at Dunstable; but after a little rest, he was so intent upon his business, that before day he marched toward Northampton, and carried such a Christmas into those parts, as they never had seen. For besides his plundering and destroying all the houses, parks, and possessions of the barons, his manner was still, as he went along, to order his incendiaries to fire the hedges and villages, which could not be turned into plunder, "That he might refresh his fight with the damages of his enemies;" Matt. Paris, recalling that word, "If," says he, "they are to be called his enemies, who were only willing to introduce him into the way of justice and humanity." They were, indeed, his best friends in it, but they paid very dear for that good office.

For before this, the spiritual sword came likewise brandishing out against them, and they were run through and through with the pope's excommunications. He first issued out a general excommunication against them, which they did not mind, nor think themselves concerned in, as being not named in it, nor indeed described. For they
were

were none of the *disturbers of the peace* that were there mentioned, who turned the kingdom upside down, and were worse than the Saracens, for endeavouring to expel their cross-bearing King from his realm (which they had never attempted nor intended) who, as he had engaged himself, so it was to be hoped he would accordingly go and succour the holy land. And therefore the pope was forced to curse them over again by name; and reciting some of the principal of them, he involved all their *partakers and adherents* in the same condemnation; and to make sure work, he laid the city of London under an interdict. As for their poor charter, that was very short-lived; for it bears date June 15, and was made void and disannulled by the pope the Bartholomew-day following. The barons, indeed, despised all these swaggering proceedings of the pope against them, as knowing that the causeless curse will never come, and alledging, that it was all upon false suggestions, and that he usurped an authority in matters which did not lie before him. "For who made him a judge, or divider of inheritances?" A power which St. Peter never had, and which his humble master declined when it was offered him. But though this pontifical ware was regarded at London as it deserved, where the pre-

lates likewise did not think fit to publish it, yet in that superstitious age it could not fail to influence weak minds, when all the subjects of England were enjoined to be aiding to King JOHN against the barons, *for the remission of their sins*. For who that had a soul to save, would not kill a baron if he could? It was King JOHN's holy war. And it must needs strangely heighten and animate his insolent crew, to see themselves thus backed with divine authority, and would make them play the Devil in God's name. Thus the sword helped the sword, and the spiritual one whetted and set an edge upon the material.

It was the misery of the barons to have their country over-run in this manner, and not be in a condition to help it. As for their own losses, they did not mind them. When messengers came thick with bad tidings, that their castles and possessions were gone and destroyed, they only looked upon one another, and said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away." When they heard how their wives and daughters were abused, they vented themselves by inveighing bitterly "Against the pope and his most dearly beloved son in CHRIST, JOHN." But when they thought of England, England, then they lamented indeed,
and

and laid the ruin of it deeply to heart. And resolving to have done with such a barbarous tyrant, and to chuse a new King; after some debate, they unanimously agreed upon LEWIS, the dauphin of France. Their main reason was, because the most of K. JOHN's army being subjects of France, upon the first appearance of LEWIS, they would be apt to join him, and leave K. JOHN, whereby of necessity he would be soon brought to reason, and in all probability, it would be a very short war. LEWIS readily accepted their offer, and came over upon the security of twenty-four of the principal barons' sons for hostages; and being joyfully received at London by the barons, had homage and fealty sworn to him, and he himself swore "To restore them their good laws, and their lost inheritances." After which, he wrote to the King of Scotland to come and do him homage, and to all the great men of England to come and do the like, or else immediately depart the kingdom. Upon which, the earls of Warren, Arundel, Salisbury, K. JOHN's brother, and the earl marshal's son, with many others, readily obeyed this summons, and left K. JOHN, as did his foreigners, all but the Poitovins; some of them returning home with their spoils, and the rest coming over to the dauphin.

FROM

30 HISTORY OF

FROM the first arrival of LEWIS, K. JOHN never stood his ground; and though he came with his great army to Dover to hinder his landing, yet he durst not trust that army to engage, but leaving a strong garrison in Dover castle, he took a run to Guilford, and from thence to Winchester without stopping: whereby he both gave LEWIS a free passage to London to join the barons, and also lost most of his new conquests in less time than he gained them. But the King of France undervalued all his son's successes, swearing that he had not gotten one foot of ground in England till he was possessed of Dover castle, which made him undertake a vigorous, though fruitless siege of that place: where, in a short time, the King of Scotland came and did him homage,

BUT, while the dauphin was engaged in that siege, there happened an accident which altered the whole scene of affairs. The viscount of Melun, a nobleman of France, who came over with LEWIS, fell very sick at London. And, finding himself at the point of death, he sent for some of the barons of England, who were left to take care of the city, to come to speak with him; to whom he said, "I am grieved for you, at the thoughts of your desolation and destruction,
" because

“ because you are wholly ignorant of the perils
 “ that hang over your heads ; for LEWIS has
 “ taken an oath, and sixteen earls and barons of
 “ France with him, that, if ever he get England,
 “ and be crowned King, he will condemn all the
 “ barons that are now in arms with him against
 “ K. JOHN, to perpetual banishment, as traitors
 “ against their sovereign lord, and will extirpate
 “ the whole race of them out of the land. And
 “ lest you should doubt of the truth of this, I
 “ that lie here ready to die, do affirm to you
 “ upon the peril of my soul, that I myself was
 “ one of those that were engaged with LEWIS in
 “ this oath. Wherefore I now counsel you, by all
 “ means, to look carefully to yourselves hereafter,
 “ and to make the best use of what I have told
 “ you, and to keep it under the seal of secrecy.”

When this nobleman had thus said, forthwith he
 expired. When this dying secret came to be spread
 amongst the rest of the barons, they were sadly
 cast down, finding themselves surrounded with
 difficulties, and perplexed on every side. For,
 as a concurrent proof of what viscount Melun
 had said, LEWIS, instead of restoring them to their
 rights, according to his oath, had given all the
 lands and castles of the barons, as fast as he won
 them, to his own Frenchmen: and though the
 barons

barons grumbled at this, yet they could not prevent it. But what they laid most to heart was, that he had branded them as traitors. They were excommunicated every day, and despoiled of all terrene honour, and driven to all extremities of body and soul. In this miserable perplexity, many of them thought of returning and reconciling themselves to K. JOHN, but that the breach was too wide. They were plainly at their wits end, and were willing to do any thing to be rid of this perjured and perfidious foreigner, who had thus ungratefully entered into a desperate conspiracy against them.

DURING this tedious siege of Dover castle, where LEWIS and many of his barons were sure to be maintained, K. JOHN, who had been dodging up and down, took this opportunity of making a terrible inroad into the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, where he made his usual progress northward: as if he had taken up a resolution to live and die in his calling. For one of the last things he did before he sickened, was burning to ashes all the stacks of corn as he went along, in all the mannors of the abbot of Croyland, which were but just inned that harvest. He was first indisposed at Swinshed abby, but his illness

increasing,

increasing, he could hardly reach Newark castle; and there, by the advice of the abbot CROESTOUN, he confessed, and received sacrament. After which, he appointed his eldest son HENRY, his heir, and ordered the realm to swear to him, and sent his letters under his seal to all the sheriffs and castellans of the kingdom to be attendant on him. Just when he was dying, there arrived messengers from some of the barons, about forty of them, with letters to be reconciled to him; but he was not in a condition to mind such affairs.

IN ten days time after K. JOHN's death, that party which had adhered to him, with GUALLO the pope's legate, made haste to crown his son at Gloucester. And because he was not yet ten years old, and so no ways concerned in the detested cruelties of his father, and might be used as an expedient to drive out an already hated and insolent foreigner, he was presently accepted by the kingdom; while on the other hand, upon the first knowledge of K. JOHN's death, LEWIS had, in his own conceit, wholly subdued and swallowed up the kingdom: but he found the contrary in summoning Dover castle upon this occasion, thinking to have had the castle for his news; for he met with such a resolute denial as he took for

an answer, and broke up the siege. Afterwards he took some few places; but the young King's party still increasing, and many of the barons, by degrees, falling from him, and the forces he had sent for out of France being utterly defeated at sea, and all sunk or taken, and he and the barons that were with him being closely besieged in the city of London, he was forced to come to this composition: "That LEWIS and all his foreigners
" should depart the kingdom, and that he should
" never lay claim to it hereafter, but restore
" what belonged to the King in France, and to
" have fifteen thousand marks for his voyage." And on the other hand, the King, the legate, and the great marshal, being protector, swore, "That
" they would restore to the barons, and all others
" of the realm, all their rights and inheritances,
" with all those liberties which they had before
" demanded, for which the war had begun be-
" twixt K. JOHN and the barons." This composition was made by both parties in an island in the Thames, near the town of Stains, September 11, A. D. 1217.

So that within two years and three months Magna Charta had been granted, and destroyed, and damned by the pope; and revived, and renewed

newed again by fresh oaths, and that even of the pope's legate.

I SHALL very briefly shew what fate it had in the reign of HENRY III. for I do not remember any fighting about the confirmation of it in any succeeding reign ; wherein I shall only recite the matter of fact, reserving the matter of right till afterwards.

IN the fifth year of his reign he was crowned again at Westminster ; and three years after, which was the eighteenth of his age, at a parliament at London, he was desired by the archbishop and the other lords to confirm the liberties and free customs for which the war was first moved against his father. And, as the archbishop evidently shewed, the King could not decline the doing of it ; because, upon the departure of LEWIS out of England, he himself had sworn, and all the nobility of the realm with him, that they would observe all the said liberties, and have all others observe them. Upon which, WILLIAM BREWER, who was one of the privy council, made answer in behalf of the King, saying, " The liberties you desire ought not in justice to be observed, because " they were extorted by violence." Which speech

the archbishop taking very ill, rebuked him: "WILLIAM, quoth he, if you loved the King, you would not be a hindrance to the peace of the kingdom." But the King, seeing the archbishop going to be very angry, said, "We have all of us sworn to these liberties, and we are all bound to observe what we have sworn." And, forthwith taking advice upon it, sent his letters to the sheriff of every county, to cause twelve knights or legal men to make an inquisition upon oath what were the liberties of England in the time of K. HENRY, his grandfather, and to make him a return of it by a certain day.

THIS vowing, and afterwards making inquiry was ill resented, and was one of the false shifts which were so peculiar to that prince. The motion of the archbishop was so manifestly necessary for the settling the young King in his throne, that our historian DANIEL, says, it was *impiously opposed* by WILLIAM BREWER: and, indeed, the reflexions he makes on the whole passage are very remarkable from the pen of a courtier. I only observe, that WILLIAM BREWER was the fittest interpreter of an arbitrary prince's mind; for he was an old arbitrary instrument, and one of King JOHN's generals in his barbarous invasion; and
though

though he himself had since sworn to Magna Charta, that made no matter; for such false changes and conversions always turn cat again, as soon as they find game, and spy a mouse.

THE next year the King being declared by the pope's bull of full age, and LEWIS being now King of France, and keeping possession of all the King's dominions beyond the seas, at a parliament held at Westminster, he desired a fifteenth for the recovery of them. And though many of the earls and barons had thereby lost their inheritances as well as the King, yet the whole assembly agreed in this answer: "That they would freely grant the King what he desired, but upon condition, if he would grant them their long desired liberties." The King, out of covetousness of this aid, has charters presently written and sealed, and sent to all the counties, and an oath in writing, for all men to swear to them; while RICHARD, the King's brother, because they had hitherto been ill kept, cried out they were cozening charters,

MATTHEW PARIS says, he therefore forbears to recite the tenor of these charters, because he had done it before in K. JOHN's reign, for the
 charters

charters of both Kings were alike. "In nullo
"inveniuntur diffimiles."

Two years the land rested, enjoying their liberties which were punctually kept, till the King at a parliament at Oxford declared himself to be of full age, and took that occasion to have a new seal, and to cancel the charter of the forests, as granted in his minority, and to cause all that would enjoy the benefit of that charter, to take out particular charters under his new seal: for which they paid exorbitant fines, such as his chief justiciary pleased.

UPON this, and a great oppression of his brother RICHARD soon after, the earls and barons were up in arms, and had drawn together a great body of men at Stanford; from whence they send him a message *in very big words*, That he, forthwith, make amends to his brother for the injury done him, the fault of which they lay upon the justiciary; and that he should immediately restore the charters of the forest which he had cancelled at Oxford, and send them to them sealed, grievously denouncing, "That otherwise they would compel him with their swords." Whereupon, he called

called a parliament to Northampton, and gave them full satisfaction for their demands.

Six years after, the barons had an outrageous violation of Magna Charta to complain of, and an intolerable grievance to the nation: For the King had not only filled the offices of his court with Poitovins, to the great oppression of his natural subjects, but also had invited in two thousand Poitovins and Britons, with which he garrisoned his castles. Upon this, earl RICHARD, the marshal of the kingdom, taking several of the lords along with him, went boldly to the King, and openly reprov'd him, that because by evil counsel he had called in Poitovin foreigners to the oppression of his realm, and natural born subjects of the realm, of their laws likewise and liberties; wherefore he humbly besought the King that he would speedily reform such abuses as these, which were the imminent destruction of his crown and realm. Moreover he affirmed, that if the King refused this proceeding, both he and the rest of the noblemen of the kingdom would so long continue to withdraw themselves from his councils, as he consorted with foreigners. To this, PETER, bishop of Winchester, who was prime minister, made answer, That is was very
lawful

lawful for our lord the King to call in what foreigners he pleased for the defence of his kingdom and crown, and even such and so many as might be able to compel his proud and rebellious subjects to their duty. The earl marshal and the lords went away very much dissatisfied with this answer, and promised to one another that in this cause, which concerned the whole nation, they would manfully fight it out to the separation of their souls from their bodies.

IN the mean while, the bishop of Winchester and his accomplices had so far perverted the King's heart to hate and despise the English nation, that he studied the extirpation of them all manner of ways, and by a few at a time, invited over so many legions of Poitovins, that they almost filled all England; with troops of which, wherever the King went, he still was walled in and environed. Nor was anything done in the kingdom but as the bishop of Winchester and this rout of Poitovins ordered it. The King then calls a parliament to meet on Midsummer-day at Oxford, but the aforefaid associated lords would not come at his summons, partly for fear of the lying in wait of these foreigners, and partly out of the indignation which they conceived against the
King

King for calling in aliens in contempt of them: upon this, it was judicially decreed, that they should be summoned twice and thrice, to try whether they would come or no. Here at this assembly at Oxford, ROGER BACON, while he was preaching the word of God before the King and the bishops, told him roundly, That he would never enjoy any settled peace, unless he removed the bishop of Winchester and PETER RIVALLIS from his councils. And when others who were present protested the same thing, the King began a little to recollect himself, and incline to reason, and signified to the associated barons that they should come to a parliament July 11, at Westminster, and there, by their advice, he would rectify what was fit to be amended. But when the barons had heard that many freebooters were called in by the King with horses and arms, and that they had arrived by degrees, and but a few at a time, and could see no footsteps of peace, but likewise suspected the innate treachery of the Poitovins, they let alone going to the parliament; but they sent him word by solemn messengers, That setting aside all delay, he should remove the bishop of Winchester and all the Poitovins from his court: But, in case he would not, they all by the common council of

the kingdom would expell him and his evil counsellors out of the realm, and proceed to the creation of a new King.

THE king was struck with this message, and the court were very much concerned at it, fearing lest the error of the son should be worse than his father's, who was very near being driven out of his kingdom, and making good the name which was given him by a kind of presage of JOHN the Exile. But bishop PETER gave the King advice to make war upon these rebellious subjects, and to bestow their castles and lands upon the Poitovins, who might defend the realm of England from his traitors; bragging that he both could and would give deep and not scoundrel counsel: for time was when he had governed the emperor's council in the east, and that his wisdom was formidable both to the Saracens and to other nations. So the king, returning again to the wrong, first wreaked his anger upon GILBERT BASSET, whom, having seized a manor of his and he coming to claim his right, he called traitor, and threatened if he did not get out of his court to have him hanged. And he likewise commanded RICHARD SEWARD a warlike knight,

knight, that had married this GILBERT's sister or niece without his licence, as he said, to be taken up. And indeed being jealous of all the other noble and powerful men of the kingdom, he required hostages of them, such and so many as might satisfy him that they would not rebel.

To the parliament at Westminster, August 1. the earls and barons came armed, and the earl marshal was on his way coming to it; but going to lodge at his sister's house who was wife to RICHARD the King's brother, she advertised him of his danger, and that he would be seized. He being a man of a noble breast, could not readily believe woman's talk till she made it out; and then night coming on he rode another way, and never drew bit till he came well wearied into Wales. There were many earls and barons at this parliament, but there was nothing done in it because of the absence of the earl marshal, GILBERT BASSET, and some other lords.

AFTER this, the King, by the advice of the bishop of Winchester, gave summons to all that held of him by knight service, to be ready with their horses and arms at Gloucester, a week before assumption-day. And when the earl mar-

shal and many others that were associated with him, would not come at that appointed time, the King, as if they had been traitors, caused their houses to be set on fire, their parks and ponds to be destroyed, and their castles to be besieged. These that were said to be associated were very noble persons, and there were many others no mean men that adhered to them: all these did King HENRY cause to be proclaimed outlaws and banished men, without the judgment of his court and of their peers, and gave their lands to the Poitovins, and thereby adding sorrow to sorrow, and redoubling their wounds. He gave commandment likewise that their bodies should be seized wherever they could be found within the realm.

IN the mean time, bishop PETER does what he can to weaken the marshal's party, and corrupted the earls of Chester and Lincoln with a thousand marks (cheap lords!) to leave the marshal and the cause of justice, and to be reconciled to the King and to be of his side. For as for RICHARD the King's brother, he was gone off from the marshal some time before. When the marshal had heard all this, he entered into a confederacy with LEWELLIN prince of Wales, and

and other peers of that country, who swore none of them would make peace without the other. Within a week's time after the appointed rendezvous at Gloucester, there arrived at Dover many armed men from the parts beyond the sea, and BALDWIN DE GYSNES with a force out of Flanders, who came to the King at Gloucester. This force, with what he had before, made a numerous army, with which he advanced to Hereford.

AFTER this, the King, by the advice of bishop PETER, sends a defiance to the marshal by the bishop of St. David's, and thereupon marches to make war upon him, and lays siege to one of his castles. But when he had furiously assaulted it many days in vain, and his army wanted provisions, so that there was a necessity of raising the siege, the King grew ashamed of his enterprize: whereupon he sent several bishops to the earl marshal to desire him to save the King's honour; and, that he might not be thought to have made a siege to no purpose, to surrender him the castle upon these conditions: First, that he would after fifteen days restore to the earl marshal the castle again entire, and in the same state it was. And secondly, that in the mean time he would reform and amend all things that were amiss in
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the kingdom, by the advice of the bishops, who were his sureties for the performance of these things. And to perfect and complete all this, the King appointed the marshal and the banished lords to come to a parliament, which he meant to hold at Westminster the first week after Michaelmas.

WHEN the fifteen days were out, from the time of the marshal's surrender of his castle into the King's hands, upon condition, that after that term he should have it restored to him again, the marshal sent to the King, to desire him to deliver him back his castle according to the covenant, of which he made the bishop of Winchester and STEPHEN SEGRAVE the justiciary his sureties, which likewise they had confirmed by taking an oath. But the King answered with indignation, that he was so far from restoring him that castle, that he would sooner subdue all the rest he had. When therefore the marshal saw that there was no faith, nor oath, nor peace kept by the counsellors of the King, he gathered an army and besieged his own castle, and with little ado won it. The King was, at this time, holding his parliament as he had promised his great men, that by their advice he might redress those things which were amiss; but the evil counsel he then followed, did not suffer
it

it to be done. Though many that were there present, humbly besought him for God's sake, that he would make peace with his barons and nobles. And other persons in favour with the King, namely, the friars, predicants, and minorities, whom he used to reverence and hearken to, these earnestly exhorted him, that he would study to carry himself lovingly as he ought to do towards his natural subjects, whom without judgment of their peers he had driven into banishment, burned their manor-houses, cut down their woods, destroyed their ponds; and being led and misled by the bad counsel of bad men, sets aside his lieges whose native blood would never suffer them to warp, and prefers other whiffling people before them; and, which is worse, calls those traitors by whom he ought to order the peace and counsels of the realm, and settle all affairs. To this the bishop of Winchester made answer, that the peers of England are not as they are in France; and therefore the King may judge and condemn and banish any of them by his own justices of his own appointing. The bishops hearing this, as it were with one voice, began to threaten that they would excommunicate the principal of the King's evil counsellors by name; and they named the bishop himself as the ring-leader of them, and

and his kinsman RIVALLIS, the justiciary, and the treasurer. To whom the bishop answering, alledged, that he was consecrated bishop at Rome by the pope, and was exempted from their power, and appealed to the apostolic see. And so the bishops only excommunicated in general all those that had or should alienate the King's heart from his natural subjects of the realm, and all that should disturb the peace of the realm.

IN this parliament the King had tidings that the earl marshal had taken his castle in Wales, and killed several of his knights and servants. At which the King was much incensed, and commanded the bishops to excommunicate him; but it was the answer of them all, that it would be an unworthy thing to excommunicate a man for seizing a castle that was all his own, and for taking possession of his own right. But the King still enraged, summoned again all his knights with horses and arms to Gloucester, the the morrow after all-saints: and there he gathered a numerous army and entered Wales, breathing and panting after the destruction of the marshal. But he, like a provident warrior, had beforehand driven away all the cattle, and withdrawn all provisions, so that the King had

no

no subsistence for his army in those parts, but was forced to march another way, and came to the castle of Grosmund. Where, while he spent some days, the marshal and his associates sent scouts to discover the posture of his army; and on Martinmas-night, all of them but the marshal, who would not invade the King, with a good army surprized the King's camp, where they fled away almost naked: and the conquerors on the other side would not hurt any of them nor take one prisoner, excepting two knights, who indiscreetly * making resistance were killed, rather by themselves than by the others. But they took away all their carriages and provisions, money and arms, and so retired again into their strong holds.

I BELIEVE such a modest victory was never read of; and Matt. Paris pleasantly calls them for witnesses of the truth of this rout, who run away and lost all they had in it: the bishops of Winchester and Chichester, SEGRAVE the justiciary, RIVALLIS the treasurer, the earls of Norfolk and Salisbury, and many more. The King, who had

* *Indiscrete rebellantes.*

been left even as good as alone amidst the enemies, when all was over, put some of his Poitovin dragoons into his Welch garrisons to prevent incursions, and so returned to Gloucester, where he kept his Christmas. But in the mean time, on St. Katherine's-day, the marshal made a great slaughter of the Poitovins at Monmouth: and he and the banished lords watched the King's castles so narrowly, that when any went out of them abroad to prey, they took nothing else of them for their ransom but their heads; insomuch, that in a short time there lay dead such a multitude of these foreigners in the high-ways and other places, as infected the air.

As for the discourse which passed betwixt the marshal and friar AGNELLUS, who was familiar to the King and his counsellor, and came into Wales to tell the marshal what the King and his counsellors said of him, and to make overtures to him, it is too long to be here inserted, but is exceedingly well worth the reading as it stands in Matt. Paris, p. 391, 392, 393. wherein the marshal makes such a solid defence of his whole proceedings, and discovers so well a grounded zeal for the rights of his country, as is sufficient to inspire every English breast with the love of a
righteous

righteous cause. Friar AGNELLUS tells him, that the King's counsellors would have him submit to the King's mercy, and that, besides other reasons, it was his interest so to do; because the King was richer and more powerful than he; and as for foreign aid, where the marshal could bring one stranger the King could bring seven. The marshal replies "It is true, the King is richer and more powerful than I; but he is not more powerful than God, who is justice itself, in whom I trust in the maintenance and prosecution of mine and the kingdom's right: nor do I trust in foreigners, nor will ever seek their aid, unless, which God forbid! I shall be compelled to it by some unexpected and immutable necessity. And I know full well that the King can bring seven to my one; and truly, I believe in the way that he is in, he will soon bring more into the realm, than he will be able to get out again." And after he had answered many other arguments, as he might confide in the King and his counsellors, and had reckoned up many instances of the court's treachery and breach of their oaths about Magna Charta, and in several other cases, he says, "Neither would
 " it be for the King's honour, that I should con-
 " sent to his will, which were not supported by
 " reason; nay, therein I should do injury both

“ to himself and to that justice which he ought
“ to maintain and exercise towards his subjects:
“ and I should give a bad example to all men of
“ deserting justice and the prosecution of right,
“ for the sake of an erroneous will, against all
“ justice, and to the injury of the subject; for
“ hereby it would appear that we had more love
“ for our worldly possessions, than for righteousness
“ itself.” But I wrong the discourse, by
singling any particulars out of it.

THE King kept his Christmas at Gloucester with a very thin court, the late rout at Grosmund-castle having scattered them. And the morrow after, JOHN of Monmouth, a nobleman, one of the King's warriors in Wales, attempting to surprize the marshal, was entirely defeated with the loss of a great number of Poitovins and others, himself narrowly escaping; which his estate did not, for the marshal immediately burned and destroyed it. The same did the other exiled lords by all the King's counsellors in those parts; for they had laid down, amongst themselves, this laudable and general rule, “ That they would hurt
“ no body, nor do them any damage, but only
“ the evil counsellors of the King, by whom they
“ had been driven into banishment, and used in
“ the

“ the same kind.” And a week after Twelftide the marshal and LEOLINE entered the King’s lands, and laid them waste as far as Shrewsbury, the King and bishop PETER being still at Gloucester; but not having strength to oppose them, they retired to Winchester. But the King’s heart was so hardened against the marshal by the evil counsel that he made use of, that when the bishops admonished him to make peace with the marshal “ Who fought for the cause of justice *,” he made answer, “ That he never would make peace with him, unless he would acknowledge himself a traitor with a halter about his neck.”

WHEN the bishop of Winchester and the other evil counsellors of the King saw all their measures broken, and the Poitovins thus cut off by the marshal, despairing ever to overcome him by force of arms, they fell to plotting and laying a train for his life, which was by a letter sent into Ireland to this effect: “ Whereas RICHARD, late marshal of the King of England, for his manifest treason, was, by judgment of the said King’s court, banished the realm, and for ever outed of all the patrimony and possessions he

* *Qui pro justitia decertabat.*

“ had,

“ had, and yet remains in rebellion: these are
“ therefore to require you, that if he should chance
“ to come into Ireland, you take care to seize him
“ and bring him to the King dead or alive; and,
“ for your care herein, the King grants all
“ the inheritance of all the late marshal’s lands
“ and possessions in Ireland, which are now
“ fallen to his disposal, to be shared amongst you.
“ And for this promise of the King to be made
“ good to you, we all, by whose counsel the
“ King and kingdom are governed, do make our-
“ selves sureties, provided you fail not in the pre-
“ mises.” This writing was directed to MAU-
RICE FITZ-GERALD the King’s justiciary in Ire-
land, and several other great men, and some that
were liegemen to the marshal, but faithless:—and
after this writing of unheard of treason was framed,
though the King knew nothing of the contents
of it, yet they compelled him to put his seal;
and they, to the number of eleven, put to their
seals, and so sent it over.

THIS wrought with the Irish great men according to the wish of the evil counsellors, for out of covetousness, they immediately entered into the conspiracy, and privately sent word back,
“ That if the King’s promise were confirmed to
“ them

“ them under the great seal, they would do their utmost to effect the business.” Whereupon, the said counsellors with a treasonable violence, surreptitiously got the great seal from the bishop of Chichester, who did not consent to this fraud, and so sent a charter, wherein every particular man’s share is expressed under the great seal. As soon as this damnable writing arrived in Ireland, the conspirators took an oath to accomplish the thing; and in order to it raised an army, wherewith they invaded his lands, and took some of his castles, that by these injuries they might provoke him, and draw him into Ireland.

WHILE this Irish plot went on, at Candlemas the King held a parliament at Westminster, where he grievously accused several of the bishops, and chiefly ALEXANDER of Chester, for holding correspondence with the marshal, and for endeavouring to depose him from the throne of the kingdom. The said bishop, to clear himself and the rest of the bishops, immediately excommunicated all those who had any such wicked thoughts against the King; and all those who slandered the bishops in that sort, who were wholly solicitous for the King’s honour and safety. Afterward in this parliament, EDMUND, elect of Canterbury, and

and the rest of the bishops, came to the King, condoling the desolation both of him and the kingdom; and as it were with one heart, and mind, and mouth, said: "Our lord the King, we tell you in the name of God, as your liegemen, that the counsel you now have and use, is neither sound nor secure, but cruel and perilous both to you and the realm of England; We mean the counsel of PETER, bishop of Winchester, PETER RIVALLIS, and their accomplices: First, because they hate and despise the English nation, calling them traitors, and causing them all to be so termed, thereby turning away your heart from the love of your nation, and our hearts and the hearts of the nation from you; as appears by the marshal, than whom there is not a better man in your land, whom, by dispersing their lyes on both sides, they have perverted and alienated from you. And by the same counsel as their's is, your father JOHN first lost the hearts of his country, and afterwards Normandy, and other lands; exhausted his treasure, and almost lost England, and never afterwards had peace. By the same counsel several disasters have happened to yourself;" which they there enumerate. They likewise tell him, by the faith in which they were bound to him, that his counsel was not for peace, but for breach of
peace,

peace, and disturbance of the land ; that his counsellors might grow rich by the troubles of the nation and the disherison of others, which in peace they could not compass. Amongst the items of their present grievances, which it would be too long here to recite, this is one, " That these counsellors confound and pervert " the law of the land," which has been sworn and corroborated by excommunication ; so that it is very much to be feared that they stand excommunicated, and you for intercommuning with them." And they conclude, These things we faithfully tell you, and before God we desire, advise and admonish you, that you remove this counsel from you ; and as the custom is in other realms, that you manage your kingdom by your own faithful sworn subjects, that are of your own kingdom. For we assure you, that unless you speedily redress and reform these grievances, we will proceed to excommunication, both against you and all other gainfayers, staying no longer than for the consecration of the archbishop elect." And when they had thus said, the King humbly demanded a short truce, saying, that he could not so suddenly remove his council, till he had audited an account of his treasure committed to them. And so the parliament broke up,

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with

with a confidence that peace and agreement would be had in a short time.

THE ninth of April there came to parliament at Westminster the king with the earls and barons, and the archbishop lately consecrated with his suffragans, that they might make some wholesome provision for the realm, which was still in disorder. The archbishop, taking to him the bishops and the other prelates, went to the King, and laid before him the bad state and imminent danger of the kingdom, and rehearsed all the grievances which they had mentioned in the last parliament; and told him plainly, that unless he would speedily rectify his error, and make peaceable agreement with his loyal subjects, he and all the prelates there would forthwith excommunicate both the King himself, and all that should contradict this peace and agreement. But the pious King hearing the advice of his prelates, lowly answered, “ That he
“ would be governed by their counsels in all
“ things :” so that in few days after seeing his error, and repenting of it, he dismissed PETER of Winchester and RIVALLIS; and expelling all the Poitovins from his court and castles, he sent them into their own country, charging them
“ never

“ never to see his face any more.” And afterwards being very desirous of peace, sent EDMUND the archbishop, with the bishops of Chester and Rochester into Wales, to LEOLINE and the marshal, to treat of peace.

WITH LEOLINE they might treat, but the earl marshal was gone into Ireland, as it had been before projected by the evil counsellors, to take care of his castles and possessions, which he heard were seized and spoiled: where as soon as he arrived, he was waited upon by GEOFFREY MARSH his liegeman, a perfidious old man, who was one of those to whom the letter was directed, and was a sharer in the lands which were granted by charter. But having been an old servant to his father, and pretending an extraordinary honour and affection for the marshal, he thereby had that power with him, as to lead him into all the snares and traps which were laid for him, and which at last cost him his life, though he sold it very dear. The story is too long for this place, but he fell a noble sacrifice for the English liberties, though neither the first nor the last in that kind,

AFTER

AFTER Easter the King being willing to meet his archbishop and bishops, whom he had sent into Wales, was going to Gloucester, and lay at his manor of Woodstock, where messengers came to him out of Ireland with an account of the death of the earl marshal. Whereupon the King, breaking forth into weeping and lamentation, to the admiration of all that were present, made sad moan for the death of so brave a knight, constantly affirming that he had not left his peer in the kingdom. And immediately calling for the priests of his chapel, caused an obsequy to be solemnly sung for his soul, and on the morrow after mass bestowed large alms upon the poor. Blessed therefore is such a King, who knows how to love those that offend him, and merit with prayers and tears forgiveness of his faithful subjects, whom upon false suggestions he had some time hated. When he came to Gloucester, EDMUND and the other bishops met him, and told him that LEOLINE insisted upon it, as a preliminary of the peace, that the banished barons should be restored. Upon this he summons them to a parliament at Gloucester, to which they came under the safe conduct of the bishops, and were restored to all their rights. Afterwards EDMUND caused a copy of the letter, concerning the treachery prepared for

the earl marshal, to be read in full parliament, at which the King and the whole assembly wept. And the King confessed in truth, that being compelled by the bishop of Winchester and his other counsellors, he had commanded his seal to be put to some letters that were presented to him; but he affirmed with an oath, "That he never heard the contents of them." To whom the archbishop said, "King, search your conscience: for all those that procured these letters to be sent, or were privy to them, are as guilty of the marshal's death, as if they had killed him with their own hands." Then the King taking advice, summoned his ministers to answer for his treasure, and the ill use of his seal when he knew nothing of it: upon which some took sanctuary, others absconded, and some fled to Rome. RIVALLIS and SEGRAVE were afterwards tried in the King's bench, where the King himself sitting with the judges, charged them with the particulars of their evil counsel, "and called them wicked traitors;" and they were deeply fined. And yet the next year these two were received into grace and favour again, after he had removed many of his new counsellors and officers, to the admiration of his people, and had demanded the great seal from the bishop of Chester his chancellor with a great deal of

of reproof, though he had unblameably administered his office, and was a singular pillar of truth in the court. But the chancellor refused it, saying, "That having received the seal by the common council of the realm, he could not resign it to any one without the like common assent."

THE miseries of the kingdom still go on, and no other can be expected from such a property of a prince, who set his seal to destroy his best subjects blindfold, and say his wicked counsellors compelled him to it; and after he himself has impeached them, and publicly blackened them with his own mouth, "and threatned to have their eyes pulled out," takes them again into his bosom. And therefore in all the succeeding parliaments we meet with nothing but their repeated complaints of the violations of Magna Charta, and their ineffectual endeavours to redress them; feigned humiliations and sorrow on the King's side, with promises of amendment, but no performance; asking for money, and then being upbraided with what he had already, and that at several times he had wasted eight hundred thousand pounds, since he began to be a dilapidator and consumer of the kingdom: they gave him money once for all, and he gives them a charter never to injure them any more

more in that kind, by requiring any more aids: and such like transactions as these, till we come to Ann. Dom. 1244. when again he wants money. And then upon these following considerations, that because the charter of liberties, which the King had long since granted, and for the observation whereof EDMUND the archbishop had sworn and most faithfully passed his word on the King's behalf, had not hitherto been kept: and because the aids which had been granted to the King, had turned to no profit of the King or kingdom: and because of other grievances which the King promises to redress, the parliament came to this resolution, " That there should be a prorogation of three
 " weeks, and that if in the mean time the King
 " should freely chuse himself such counsellors, and
 " order the rights of the kingdom as should be to
 " their content, they would then give him an an-
 " swer about the aid." In these three weeks the lords drew up a provision by the King's consent, to this effect: " Concerning the liberties at ano-
 " ther time bought, granted and confirmed, that
 " for the time to come they be observed. For
 " the greater security whereof, let a new charter
 " be made, which shall make special mention of
 " these things. Let those be solemnly excommu-
 " nicated by all the prelates, who wittingly op-
 " pose

“ pose or hinder the observation of these liberties:
“ and let all those have reparation made them,
“ who have suffered in their liberties since the last
“ grant. And because neither by virtue of an
“ oath then taken, nor for fear of the holy man
“ EDMUND’s excommunication, what was then
“ promised has hitherto been kept, to avoid the
“ like peril for the future, lest the latter end be
“ worse than the beginning; let four nobles and
“ powerful men of the discreetest in the realm,
“ be chosen by assent of parliament to be of the
“ King’s council, and to be sworn, that they will
“ order the affairs of the King and kingdom
“ faithfully, and do justice to all without respect
“ of persons. These shall follow our lord the
“ King, and if not all, two at least shall be pre-
“ sent to hear all complaints that come, and to
“ give speedy relief to those that suffer wrong;
“ they shall supervise the King’s treasure, that the
“ money given for public uses be so applied.
“ And they shall be conservators of the liberties.
“ And because the chancellor and justiciary are to
“ be frequently with the King, they being cho-
“ sen in parliament may be two of the conserva-
“ tors. And as they are chosen by the common
“ assent, so they shall not be removed without the
“ same, &c.”

AND

AND when (says Matt. Paris) the great men in the recess of three weeks had diligently treated of these matters, which were so exceedingly profitable for the common-wealth; the enemy of mankind, the disturber of peace, and the raiser of division, the devil, through the pope's avarice, unhappily put a stop to the whole business. For in this nick of time, comes a legate to raise money, with new and unheard of powers; and this put all into confusion, and made work for a long time after.

FOUR years after this, A. D. 1248. a parliament meets the sennight after Candlemas at London, that they may treat diligently and effectually with our lord the king, of the affairs of the realm, which is very much disordered and impoverished, and enormously maimed in our days. The parliament, understanding that the king intended to ask an aid of money, told him that he ought to be ashamed to demand such a thing, especially seeing that in the last exaction of that kind, to which the nobles of England consented with much difficulty, he gave them a charter that he would never burden nor injure them with the like again. He was likewise grievously reprehended, and no wonder, for calling in aliens,

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and

and foolishly squandering the wealth of the kingdom upon them; marrying them to his wards without their consent, and several other of his spendthrift and tyrannous practices. And, one and all, they grievously reproached him, for not having (as the magnificent Kings his predecessors had) a justiciary, chancellor and treasurer, by the common council of the realm, and as is fit and expedient; but such as follow his will, let it be what it will, so long as it is for their own gain: and who do not seek the good of the commonwealth, but their own particular profit, by gathering money, and getting the wards and revenues to themselves in the first place.

WHEN our lord the king heard this, being confounded within himself, he blushed, knowing that all of these things were very true. He therefore promised most faithfully, that he would readily redress all these things; hoping by this humility, though it were feigned, to incline all their hearts to grant him an aid. To whom the whole parliament, which had been often answered with such promises, upon advice made answer, “ That it would soon be seen whether the King
“ will reform these things or no, and will man-
“ nifestly appear in a short time. We will wait
“ a while

“ a while with patience; and as the King shall
 “ carry and behave himself toward us, so shall
 “ he have us obedient to him in all things. There-
 fore, all was adjourned, and respited for a fort-
 night after midsummer. But in the mean time,
 our lord the King, whether it proceeded from
 his own spirit, or that of his courtiers, who were
 unwilling to lose any thing of their power, was
 hardened and more exasperated, and never minded
 to make the least reparation of these abuses accor-
 ding to his promise.

WHEN the day appointed came, the parlia-
 ment came again to London, with a full belief
 and trust in the King's firm promise, that leaving
 his former errors, by the grace of God bestowed
 upon him, he would incline to more wholesome
 advice. As soon as they were assembled, there
 came this * unhandson answer from the King:
 “ All you the principal men of England, you had
 “ a mind to bring the lord your King, to the
 “ bent of your uncivil will and pleasure, and to
 “ impose a very servile condition upon him; that
 “ what every one of you may do at pleasure,

* *Illepidum responsum.*

“ should impudently be denied to him ; for it is
 “ lawful for every body to use whose and what
 “ counsel he will. And so it is lawful for every
 “ master of a family to prefer any one of his house
 “ to this or that office, or put him by it, or turn him
 “ out, which you rashly presume to deny even
 “ to your lord the King. And this presumption
 “ is still the greater, seeing servants ought by no
 “ means to judge their master, nor tie him to
 “ their conditions, nor vassals to do the like their
 “ prince ; but all inferiors whatsoever, are to
 “ be ordered and directed by the will and plea-
 “ sure of the lord and master : for the servant is
 “ not above his lord, as neither the disciple above
 “ his master ; and truly he should not be your king,
 “ but may pass for your servant, if he should be
 “ thus brought to your will. Wherefore, neither
 “ will he remove, nor chancellor, nor justiciary,
 “ nor treasurer, as you have propounded to or-
 “ der the matter ; neither will he put any other
 “ in their room.” After the same fashion, says
 Matt. Paris, there was a cavilling answer to the
 other wholesome articles which were sufficiently
 for the King’s interest. “ But he asks of you
 “ an aid of money to enable him to recover his
 “ rights in the parts beyond the seas, where-
 “ in you yourselves are alike concerned. When
 therefore

therefore the parliament had heard this, they understood clearer than the light that all this came from his present counsellors, whose reign would be at an end, and be blown away with a puff, if the baronage of all England might be heard. But seeing themselves craftily answered and opposed, they all replied, as if it had been perfectly with one breath, "That they would by no means uselessly impoverish themselves, that aliens might be proud at their cost, and to strengthen the enemies of the King and kingdom:" of which they gave instances in what happened lately in Poitou and Gascony; where the King upon an expedition out of his own head, and against their advice, lost honour, treasure, lands, and wholly miscarried. And so the parliament broke up in the utmost indignation, every one being disappointed in the great hopes which they long had from this parliament: and they carried home nothing but, as they used to do, contemptuous usage, with lost labour and expences.

THE grievances still increase, till we come to a new confirmation of Magna Charta, A. D. 1253. which was upon this occasion. The pope, for ends of his own, solicited the King to undertake

dertake an expedition to the Holy Land, and for his encouragement, granted him the tenths of the revenues of England for three years. Upon this, in a very public and solemn manner, he took upon him the cross; but some said that he only wore that badge upon his shoulders as a good argument to get money. And he swore, "That after midsummer, he would begin his journey for the following three years, unless he were hindered by death, sickness, or some other reasonable impediment." This oath he took both after the fashion of a priest with his hand upon his breast, and after the manner of a layman, laying his right hand upon the book and kissing it; and yet says the historian, the standers-by were never the surer.

BUT though the King afterwards produced the pope's mandate, wherein by the power given him of God, he granted the King his tenth, yet the bishops opposed it as an unsufferable usurpation; which put the King into the most frantic and impotent rage that ever was described: and though afterwards he closeted them, yet he could not prevail. At last about easter a parliament was called. After fifteen days debate, the consent of the whole parliament settled in these resolves,

"That

“ That they would not hinder the King’s pious
 “ intention of going to the Holy Land ; nor at
 “ the same time should the church and kingdom
 “ suffer damage.” They therefore granted the
 King the tenth of all church-revenues for three
 years, and three marks rescuage upon every
 knight’s fee for that year. And the King on his
 part, promised, that in good faith, and without
 any quirks and caviling pretences, he would faith-
 fully observe Magna Charta, and every article of
 it. Though it was no more than his father
 King JOHN had sworn to keep many years ago,
 and in like manner the present King at his coro-
 nation, and many a time after, whereby he choused
 the nation of an infinite deal of money.

ACCORDINGLY, May the third, in the great
 hall at Westminster, in the presence and with
 the consent of the king and the whole parlia-
 ment, the archbishop and the bishops in their
 pontificals with lighted candles, passed the sentence
 of excommunication against all that should vio-
 late the liberties of the church, and the liberties
 or free customs of the realm of England ; and
 those especially which are contained in the charter
 of common liberties of the realm of England,
 and of the Forest. And the charter of King
 JOHN

JOHN was accordingly rehearsed and confirmed. The form of the excommunication is somewhat large, as being strongly drawn up, and the anathemas well laid on; it is in BACON p. 131. And all the while the sentence was reading, the King laid his hand spread upon his breast, chusing to assist with that ceremony, and not with holding a wax-candle, to shew, as he said, "That his heart went along with it;" and when it was ended, he said these words, "So
 " help me God, I will faithfully keep all these
 " things inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a
 " christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a King
 " crowned and anointed."

DANIEL and BACON are wonderfully taken with the manner of this confirmation of the charters; and say, that there was never such a solemn sanction of laws, "since the law was delivered at
 " Mount Sinai." But the renowned ROBERT GROSTHEAD, bishop of Lincoln, divining and foreboding in his heart that the King would fly off from his covenants, immediately, as soon as he got down into his bishopric, caused all the breakers of the charters, and especially all the priests that were so, to be solemnly excommunicated in every parish church throughout his diocess,

dioceses, which are so many as can hardly be numbered; and the sentence was such as was enough to make the ears of those that heard it to tingle, and to quail their hearts not a little.

THE parliament being thus ended, the King presently uses the worst counsel that could be, and resolves to overthrow all that had been thus established: for it was told him, that he should not be King, at least *lord in* England, if the said charters were kept; and his father JOHN had experience of it, and chose rather to die than thus to be trampled under foot by his subjects. And these whisperers of Satan added moreover, "Take
 " no care though you incur this sentence of ex-
 " communication; for a hundred, or for a brace
 " of hundred pounds the pope will absolve you :
 " who, out of the plenitude of his power, what
 " he pleases can either loose or bind: for the
 " greater cannot command a greater than he.
 " You will have your tenth to a farthing, which
 " will amount to very many thousand marks:
 " and what lessening will it be of that inestimable
 " sum, to give the pope a small driblet, who
 " can absolve you though he himself had confirm-
 " ed the sentence, seeing it belongs to him to
 " annul, who can enact; nay, for a small gra-
 L "uity

“ tuity will enlarge the term of years for the
“ grant of the tenth, and will throw you in a
“ year or two?” Which accordingly afterwards
came to pass, as the following narration shall de-
clare. Here is a lost King and a lost nation:
Why should we read any farther?

Two years after, having spent most of that
time in the wars in GASCONY, for to the Holy
Land he never went, he calls a parliament at Lon-
don upon Hoke day, which was the fullest assem-
bly that ever was there seen. In short, the King
wants money, was in debt, and would have the
aid from the baronies to be continued in proportion
to the tenths, and so, completing their tax, he
might be bound to give them his thanks in full.
This would have amounted to such a sum as
would have impoverished the realm, and made
it defenceless, and exposed it to foreigners. Upon
consultation therefore, because that proposal was
impossible, they came to this concession, “ That
“ they would charge and burden themselves
“ much, for to have Magna Charta to be honest-
“ ly kept, from that time forth hereafter, with-
“ out pettifogging quirks, which he had so often
“ promised, and sworn and bound himself to it,
“ under the strictest ties that could be laid upon
“ his

" his soul. They demanded, moreover, to chuse
 " them a justiciary, chancellor, and treasurer, by
 " the common council of the realm, as was the
 " custom from antient times, and was just; who
 " likewise should not be removed but for mani-
 " fest faults, and by the common council and de-
 " liberation of the realm called together in par-
 " liament. For now there were so many Kings
 " in England, that the antient heptarchy seemed
 " to be revived." You might have seen grief in
 the people's countenances. For neither the pre-
 lates nor the nobles knew how to hold fast their
 Proteus, I mean their King, although he should
 have granted them all this. Because in every thing
 he transgresses the bounds of truth; and where
 there is no truth, no certainty can be had. It
 was told them likewise by the gentlemen of the
 bed-chamber, who were most intimate with the
 King, that he would by no means grant them
 their desire about the justiciary, chancellor, and
 treasurer. Moreover, their prelates were bloodi-
 ly grieved about their tenth, which they promis-
 ed conditionally, and now were forced to pay
 absolutely, the church being used like a servant
 maid. The nobles were wounded with the ex-
 action which hung over their heads, and were
 bewildered.

At last they all agreed to send a message to the King in the name of the whole parliament, that the business should be deferred till Michaelmas, "That, in the mean time they might have trial of the King's fidelity and benignity, that he proving thus perhaps towards them and their patience in the keeping the charter so many times promised, and so many times bought out, might turn again and deservedly incline their hearts towards him: and they, as far as their power would extend, would obediently give him a supply." Which, when the King did not like, and by giving no answer did not agree to it, the parliament after many fruitless debates, day after day, from morning till night, thus broke up; and the nobles of England now made ignoble, went home [then the parliament did not live at court in those days] in the greatest desolation and despair.

In the same year arrived ALIENOR, the King of Spain's sister, whom prince EDWARD had married, with such a retinue of Spaniards, as looked like an invasion, who, with great pomp, and all sorts of public rejoicings, were received at London; though with the scorn and laughter of the common people at their pride. But grave persons

sons and men of circumspection, pondering the circumstances of things, fetched deep sighs from the bottom of their hearts, to see all strangers so much in request, and the subjects of the realm reputed as vile, which they took for a token of their irreparable ruin. At the same time there was the worst news that could be of a legate *à latere* coming over, armed with legantine power, who was ready prepared in all things to second the King in the destruction of the people of England, and to noose all gainsayers and opposers of the royal will, which is a tyrannical one, and to hamper them all in the bonds of an anathema. Moreover, it terrified both the prelates and nobles, and sunk them into a bottomless pit of desperation, to see that the King by such unspeakable craftiness had brought in so many foreigners, dropping in one after another; and by degrees, had drawn into confederacy with him many, and almost all the principal men in England, as the earls of Gloucester, Warren, Lincoln, and Devonshire, and very many other noblemen; and had so impoverished the natural born subjects, to enrich his foreign kindred and relations, that in case the body of the realm should have thoughts of standing for their right, and the King were against them, they would have no power to restrain the
King

King and his foreigners, or be able to contradict them. As for earl RICHARD, who is reckoned our greatest nobleman, he stood neutral. In like manner there were others not daring to mutter or speak within their teeth. The archbishop of Canterbury, who ought to be like a shield against the assaults of the enemy, was engaged in secular affairs beyond sea, taking little care of his flock in England. The magnanimous patriots and hearty lovers of the realm, namely, the archbishop of York, ROBERT GROSTHEAD, bishop of Lincoln, WARIN DE MUNCHEMSIL, and many others, were dead and gone. In the mean time, the Poitovin kindred of the King with the provincials, and now the Spaniards and the Romans, are daily enriched with the revenues as fast as they arise, and are promoted to honours, while the English are repulsed.

IN this lamentable state was the nation again, within two years after the so much magnified confirmation of their charter, which was indeed performed with the greatest solemnity possible; for heaven and earth were called to witness it. The year following, though England still lay under oppression, yet the Welch were resolved to bear the tyranny no longer, but stood up for their

their country and the maintenance of their laws, and baffled several armies, first of the prince and afterwards of the King. They were ten thousand horse, and many more foot; who, entering into a mutual association, swore upon the gospels, that they would manfully and faithfully fight to the death for the liberties of their country and their ancient laws, and declared they had rather die with honour than spin out a wretched life in disgrace. At which manly action of their's, says the historian, "The English ought deservedly to blush, " who lay down their neck to every one that sets " his foot upon it, and truckle under strangers, " as if they were a sorry, diminutive, timorous, " little people, and a rissraff of scoundrels."

Is it very hard that the English nation must, at the same time, suffer by the Welch in their excursions upon our borders, and withal, be continually persecuted by this historian, and upbraided with the Welch valour. But so it is, that he cannot mention any English grievance, but he twits us with the Welch. BALDWIN of Rivers, by the procurement of our lady the Queen, marries a certain foreigner, a Savoyard, of the Queen's kindred. Now to this BALDWIN belongs the county of Devon; and so day by day the noble possessions

80 HISTORY OF

possessions of the English are devolved upon foreigners, "Which the faint-hearted English either will not know, or dissemble their knowledge, whose cowardice and supine simplicity is reproved by the Welch stoutness."

IN the next passage, we have an account of the King's coming to St. Alban's in the beginning of March, and staying there a week; where, all the while this historian was continually with him at his table, in his palace, and bed-chamber; "at which time he very diligently and friendly directed this writer's pen:" so that it is not to be expected we shall hear any more of the Welch. And yet the same summer, when they baffled the King's expedition against them, he rejoices "That their material business prospered in their hands." For he says, that their cause seemed to be a just cause even to their enemies. And that which heartened them most was this, that they were resolutely fighting for their antient laws and liberties; like the Trojans from whom they were descended, and with an original constancy. "Woe to the wretched English, that are trampled upon by every foreigner, and suffer their antient liberties of the realm to be puffed out and extinguished, and are not ashamed of this, when they

“ they are taught better by the example of the
 “ Welch. O England! thou art justly reputed
 “ the bondwoman of other countries, and be-
 “ neath them all: what thy natives earn hardly,
 “ aliens snatch away and carry off!”

It is impossible for an honest man ever to hate his country; but if it will suffer itself to be oppressed, it justly becomes, at once, both the pity and scorn of every understanding man, and of them chiefly that love it best. But as we cannot hate our country, so for the same reason we cannot but hate such a generation of men, as for their own little ends are willing to enslave it to all posterity; wherein, they are worse than Esau, for he only sold his own birth-right for a mess of pottage, but not that of other folks too.

In the year 1258, a parliament was called to London the day after Hoke Tuesday, for great and weighty affairs; for the King had engaged and entangled himself in great and amazing debts to the pope about the king of Apulia, and he was likewise sick of his Welch war. But when the King was very urgent for an aid of money, the parliament resolutely and unanimously answered him, “ That they neither would nor could

M

“ bear

“bear such extortions any longer.” Hereupon he betakes himself to his shifts to draw in the rich abbies to be bound for him for sums of money; but though it was well managed, he failed in it. And that parliament was prolonged and spent in altercations between the King and the great men, till the week after Ascension-day: for the complaints against the King were so multiplied daily, and the grievances were so many, by the breach of Magna Charta, and the insolence of the foreigners, that Matt. Paris says it would require special treatises to reckon up the King’s miscarriages. And the King being reprov’d for them, and convinced of the justness of the reproof, bethought and humbled himself, though it were late first, and said, “That he had “been too often bewitched by wicked counsel:” but he promised, which he likewise confirmed by an oath taken upon the altar and shrine of St. Edward, “That he would plainly and punctually “correct his former errors, and graciously comply with his natural born subjects.” But his former frequent breach of oath rendered him incredible, and neither fit to be believed nor trusted. And because the great men knew not as yet how to hold fast their Proteus, which was a hard and difficult matter to do, the parliament was put off to

to Barnabas-day, to be held without fail at Oxford. In the mean time, the chief men of England, namely, the earls of Gloucester, Leiceſter, and Hereford, the earl marſhal, and other eminent men, out of a provident precaution for themſelves, affociated: and becauſe they were vehemently afraid of the treachery of the foreigners, and much ſuſpected the little plots of the King, they came armed with a good retinue to Oxford.

THERE the great men, in the very beginning of the parliament, confirmed their former purpoſe, and immutable reſolution to have the charter of the liberties of England faithfully kept and obſerved, which the King had often granted and ſworn, and had cauſed all the biſhops of England to excommunicate, in a horrible manner, all the breakers of it, and he himſelf was one of the excommunicators. They demanded likewiſe to have a juſticiary that ſhould do equal juſtice, and ſome other public things, which were for the common profit of the King and realm, and tended to the peace and honour of them both. And they frequently, and urgently aſked and adviſed the King to follow their counſels, and the neceſſary proviſions they had drawn up; ſwearing with pledging their faiths, and giving one another their

hands, "That they would not cease to pursue
" what they had propounded, for the loss either
" of money or lands, or for the life or death of
" themselves or their's." Which, when the King
understood, he solemnly swore, "That he would
" comply with their counsels, and agree to them."
And prince EDWARD took the same oath. But
JOHN, earl of Warren, was refractory, and re-
fused it, and the King's half brothers, WILLIAM
OF VALENCE, and others. Then the sea-ports
were ordered to be strictly guarded, and the gates
of London to be close kept at nights, for fear the
foreigners should surprize it. And when they had
spent some days in deliberating what was to be
done in so weighty an affair, as repairing the state
of a broken, shattered, kingdom was, they con-
firmed their purpose with renewing their covenants
and oaths, "That neither for death, nor life, nor
" freehold, for hatred or affection, or any other
" way, they would be biased or slackened from
" purging the realm, of which they and their
" progenitors before them were the native off-
" spring, and clearing it of an alien-born brood,
" nor from the procuring and obtaining good and
" commendable laws: and if any man, whoever he
" be, should be refractory, and oppose this, they
" would compel him to join with them whether
" he

“ he would or no.” And though the King and prince EDWARD had both sworn before, yet prince EDWARD, as he could, refused this oath, and so did JOHN, earl of Warren. But HENRY, son to RICHARD, King of the Romans, was doubtful and unresolved; saying, “ That he could “ not take such an oath, unless it were with his “ father’s leave and advice.” To whom the barons publicly made answer, “ That if his father “ himself would not agree to it, he should not “ hold one furrow of land in England.” The King’s half brothers were very positive, and swore bloodily that they would never part with any of the castles, revenues, and wards, which their brother had freely given them as long as they breathed. But while they were asserting this, and multiplying oaths not fit to be rehearsed, the earl of Leicester made answer to WILLIAM DE VALENCE, who was more swollen and haughty than the rest; “ Know for certain, that either you “ shall give up the castles which you have from “ the King, or you shall lose your head.” And the other earls and barons firmly attested the same. The Poitovins therefore, were in a great fright, not knowing what to do: for if they should retire to some castle, wanting provisions, they would soon be starved out: “ For the body of the common people

“ple of the realm, without the nobles, would
 “bésiege them, and utterly raze their castles*.”
 Whereupon, at dinner-time they stole away, as
 if it had been to go to dinner, and took their
 flight to Winchester. When the great men were
 advertised, that the Poitovins had thus taken
 their flight towards the sea-side, fearing, lest they
 might be gone to bring in foreign aid, [I suppose
 they had not forgot how K. JOHN served his ba-
 rons] they thought all delays dangerous in such
 a matter, and therefore, immediately mustered
 all their force to look after them.

THE barons on the 15th of July dismissed the
 Poitovins, and commended them to the seas in
 their passage to France, where they met with
 sorry welcome, but at last were sent home with a
 safe conduct. But the barons took care to send
 them from hence as bare as they came; for Ri-
 CHARD GRAY, governor of Dover, by their or-
 der, seized all their money, and it was appointed
 to be laid out for the public uses of the realm.
 On the 20th of the same month, came commis-
 sioners of the parliament to London, and con-
 vened all the citizēns, otherwise called barons,

* *Universitas enim regni popularis, etsi non nobiles, &c.*

of the whole city; and in the hall which is called Guildhall, they asked them if they would faithfully obey the statutes of the parliament, and immutably adhere to them, manfully resisting all opposers, and effectually aiding the parliament? Which, when they had all of them freely granted, they gave the commissioners a charter of this their grant, sealed with the common seal of the city. But they did not as yet make public proclamation of these statutes, because they were in confusion about the earl of Gloucester's being poisoned, and his brother, (as were several others) which, as appeared afterwards, was the Poitovin's farewell.

AND then, in this solicitous and weighty affair, and in this most happy renovation and right-ordering of the whole realm, FULK, bishop of London, was more lukewarm and remiss than became him, or was expedient; whereby he so much the more smutted and blackened his fame, by how much he had formerly been more generous than others. And so the barons having reposed their hopes in his breast, he provoked many of them to anger by his falling off, when by this means they believed they should set the King right with his people. But that which frightened them beyond all things was, the King's mutability

lity and unsearchable doubleness, which they perceived by a terrible word he let fall. Being one day upon the Thames in his barge, a sudden storm of thunder and lightning arose, which he dreaded above all things; and therefore immediately ordered to be set on shore, which happened to be at Durham-house, where the earl of Leicester then lay: which, when the earl understood, he ran joyfully to meet him, and reverently saluted him according to his duty; and cheering him, said, "You have no occasion to be concerned at the tempest, for now it is over." To whom the King replied in the greatest earnest, and with a stern countenance, "I am indeed afraid of thunder lightning above measure; but," with a horrid oath, "I dread thee more than all the thunder and lightning in the world." To which the earl gave a mild and gentle answer, and only let him know he had a wrong opinion of him. But all men did suspect this amazing expression proceeded from hence, that the earl had been a main man in establishing the provisions at Oxford.

THIS boded ill to those provisions, and, accordingly in a short time, the King sent privately to the pope, to be absolved from his oath, whereby
he

he was bound to keep them: which he easily obtained, not only for himself, but for all that had taken it, whereby all those who could any way corrupt, were free to be of his party.

THE next year the King kept his Christmas at the Tower with the Queen; and being, by the instigation and wicked counsel of some about him, rendered wholly averse to the covenant which he had made with his parliament, he contrived how to publish his aversion and indignation against it. In order to which, he kept his residence in the Tower; "And having broken open the locks to come at the treasure, which was deposited there *ab antiquo* *" [which I suppose was some antient heirloom or public stock of the kingdom, kept there as a reserve against some great emergency; for it is plain he had not the keys of it] "he brought it out to spend." After this, he hires workmen to repair and for-

* *Vid. artic. 24. in depositione R. 2. Thesaurum, coronas, reliquias, & alia jocalia, videlicet bona regni, quæ ab antiquo dimissa fuerant in archivis regni, pro honore regis & conservatione regni sui in omnem eventum, abstulit, &c. rotulos recordorum, statum & gubernationem regni sui tangentium deleri & abradi fecit, &c. there went, Habent enim ex antiquo statuto, &c. Decem. Scrip. 275e.*

tify the Tower, and orders the city of London to be put in a posture of defence, and all the inhabitants of it from twelve years old and upwards, swear fidelity to him; and the common crier made proclamation, "That whoever was willing to serve the King, should come away cheerily, and enter into his pay." And then he took his time to publish the pope's bull of absolution from the oath, which was done at the Paul's-cross sermon.

UPON notice of these things, there was a great confluence of the barons from all parts, with a great strength of armed men, who came and lay in the suburbs; for they were not suffered to come within the city. But from thence the barons sent messengers to the King, and humbly besought him, "That he would inviolably keep the common oath which all of them had taken; and if any thing displeased him, that he would shew it to them, that they might amend it." But, he by no means consenting to what they offered, answered harshly and threateningly, "That because they had failed in their agreement, he would comply with them no more, but that, from henceforth, every one should prepare for his own defence." At length, by the mediation

tion of some persons, the business was brought to this issue, That the King should chuse one person, and the barons another; which two should chuse a third, who having heard the complaints on both sides, should establish a lasting peace and agreement betwixt them. But this treaty was allowed to be put off till the return of prince EDWARD, who was then beyond sea.

THE prince hearing this, made haste home, that the peace might not be delayed by his absence; who, when he came, and found what vain counsels the King had taken, was very angry, and absented himself from his father's presence, adhering to the barons in this behalf, as he had sworn: and they entered into a confederacy with one another, "That they would seize
" the King's evil counsellors, and their abettors,
" and to the utmost of their power remove them
" from the King." Which, when the King understood, he betook himself, with his counsellors, into the Tower, his son and the great men abiding still without.

THE next Christmas we find him still in the Tower, with the Queen and his counsellors, that were neither profitable to him, nor faithful.

Which counsellors fearing to be assaulted, got a guard, and kept close in the Tower. At length, by the Queen's means, with much ado, some of the great men were reconciled, and made friends with them. When this was done, the King ventured himself out of the Tower, leaving the command of it to JOHN MANSEL (his principal counsellor, and the richest clergy-man in the world) and went down to Dover, where he entered the castle, which was neither offered him nor denied him. And there the King found how he had been imposed upon, when he saw a castle so carefully guarded by a guard of the barons, lie open to him. When he went away, he committed the charge of that castle to E. DE WALERAN. He went likewise to Rochester castle, and several others, and found ingress and egress at his pleasure. It is plain they only kept them for the King.

At that time the King thinking himself secure, resolved openly to depart from his oath, of which the pope had given him a release. He went, therefore, round about to several cities and castles, resolving to take them and the whole kingdom into his hands, being encouraged and animated thereto, because the King of France, together

ther with his great men, had lately promised to assist him with a great force. Coming, therefore, to Winchester, he turned his justiciary and chancellor, that were lately instituted by the parliament, out of their offices, and created *bene placito* new ones. Which, when the barons heard, they hastened with a great power towards Winchester: of which, JOHN MANSEL having timely notice, went privately down to the King, and sufficiently informed him of his danger, and fetched him hastily back again to the Tower of London.

THERE the King kept his next Christmas * with the Queen and his counsellors: at which time it was greatly laboured, both by the bishops of England and the prelates of France, to make peace betwixt the King and barons; and it came to this issue: That the King and the peers should submit themselves to the determination of the King of France, both as to the provisions of Oxford, and the spoils and damages which had been done on both sides.

ACCORDINGLY the King of France calls a parliament at Amiens, and there solemnly gives sen-

* A. D. 1263. R. 47.

tence for the King of England against the barons;
 “ Whereby the statutes of Oxford, provisions,
 “ ordinances, and obligations, were wholly an-
 “ nulled, with this exception: that by that sen-
 “ tence he did in no wise intend to derogate at
 “ all from the antient charter of JOHN, King of
 “ England, which he granted to his parliament,
 “ or whole realm*.” Which very exception com-
 pelled the earl of Leicester, and all that had their
 senses exercised, to continue in their resolution
 of holding firmly the statutes of Oxford; for
 they were founded upon that charter.

PRESENTLY after this, they all came home that
 had been present at the French parliament; the
 King of England, the Queen, BONIFACE, arch-
 bishop of Canterbury, PETER of Hereford, and
 JOHN MANSEL, who ceased not plotting and de-
 vising all the mischief they could against the ba-
 rons. From that time things grew worse and
 worse; for many great men left the earl of Lei-
 ceester and his righteous cause, and went off per-
 jured. HENRY, son to the King of the Romans,
 having received the honour of Tikhel, which
 was given him by the prince, came to the earl,

* *Universitati concessæ.*

and said, "My lord earl, I cannot any longer
 " be engaged against my father King of Ger-
 " many, my uncle King of England, and my other
 " relations; and therefore with your good leave
 " and licence, I mean to depart, but I never
 " will bear arms against you." To whom the
 earl chearfully replied, " Lord HENRY, I am
 " not at all troubled about your arms, but for
 " the inconstancy which I see in you: therefore
 " pray go with your arms, and if you please,
 " come back with your arms; for I fear them
 " not." At that time ROGER DE CLYFFORD,
 ROGER DE LEIBERN, JOHN DE VALLIBUS, HA-
 MON L' ESTRANGE, and many others, being
 blinded with gifts, went of from their fidellity,
 which they had sworn to the barons for the
 common good. *

If Matt Paris had been alive, he would have
 told us a piece of his mind concerning this false
 step of the barons, in putting their coat to arbi-
 tration, and submitting the English laws to the
 determination of an incompetent foreigner. But
 we lost his noble pen A. D. 1259. that is, about four
 years ago, presently after the establishment of the

* *In Commune.*

provisions

provisions at Oxford: so what has since followed, is taken out of the continuator of his history, who out of modesty has forborn to set his name as being unworthy, as he says, "To unloose the latchet of that venerable man's shoe." But we are told that it was WILLIAM RISHANGER, who succeeded Matt. Paris in the same employment, and prosecuted the history to the end of HENRY III. I know not by what misfortune we have lost his provisions of Oxford, which he says are written in his Addimenta: for certain it was by no neglect or omission of his, because he died with them upon his heart. For the last passage but one that he wrote, was the death of FULK BASSET bishop of London, (whom we saw above he taxed formerly upon the same account) "Who," says he, "was a noble person, and of great generosity; and if he had not a little before staggered in their common provision, he had been the anchor and shield of the whole realm, and both their stay and defence." It seems his faltering in that main affair, was what Matthew could never forgive him alive nor dead. And indeed this could not but come unexpectedly from such a man, who had always been firm and honest to that degree, as to tell the King, when he arbitrarily threatened

threatened him for some incomppliance of his to turn him out of his bishoprick: "Sir," says he, "when you take away my mitre, I shall put on a headpiece."

AND therefore, the annals of BURTON, are a valuable piece of antiquity, because they have supplied the defect, and have given us both a Latin and French copy of those provisions. It would be too large, as well as beside my purpose, to set them down. In short, whereas by Magna Charta in King JOHN's time there were twenty five barons (whereof the lord mayor of London was one) appointed to be conservators of the contents of that charter, with all power to distress the King, in case of grievances, upon notice given, were not redressed within forty days: on the other hand, in this provision of Oxford, which seems to be the easier, as much as prevention of grievances is better than the cure of them, there were twenty four of the greatest men in England ordained, twelve by the King himself, and twelve by the parliament, to be a standing council, without whose advice nothing was to be done. These were to have parliaments three times a year, where the barons might come, but the commons were excused to save charges. No wise man will say that this

was the English constitution; but these were necessary alterations by way of remedy, till they should be able to bring the government into the right channel again: for the provisions of Oxford were only provisional, like the interim in Germany, before the reformation; and to continue no longer than as so many scaffolds, till the ruins of the realm were repaired. Accordingly the utmost provision that I find was but for twelve years, as we have it in the oath of the governors of the King's castles, in the words below*.

So that the barons of England were certainly in the right, when they said, that the provisions of Oxford were founded upon the Magna Charta which the French King and the parliament al-

* *Ceo est le serment ke les gardens des chastels firent. Ke il les chastels le Rei leaument e en bone fei garderunt al oes le Rei et ses heyres. E ke eus les rendrunt al Rei u a ses heyres et a nul autre, et par sun conseil et en nul autre manere; Ceo est a saver per prodes homes de la terre esliz a sun conseil, u par la greinure partie. E ceste furme par escrit dure deske a duz ans. E de ilokes eu avant per cest establement et cest serment ne sient constreint ke franchement ne les pussent rendre al Rei u a ses heirs.* Ann. Burton, 413

lowed

allowed; for every greater contains in it the less, and the power of the twenty four counsellors at Oxford, as much as the power of coercion and punishing is above that of directing.

THE French King and parliament were so far parties, that (as we saw before) they had promised the King a powerful assistance; which gave him encouragement so openly to break his oath, and undo what he had done: which certainly the barons did not then know, or else they would have been very far from submitting to their determination; especially when they could get nothing by it. For if it had proceeded in favour of them, they only had been where they were before, a foreign confirmation adding no authority to the English laws; and that determination that was made, only served to puzzle the cause, and to bring a war upon them, which it must be this unwise expedient was intended to prevent.

THE first aggressor in this war was ROGER MORTIMER, who invaded and ravaged the lands of SIMON MONFORT; but he was soon even with him: the prince likewise took several castles; and ROBERT FERRARS earl of Derby, who was of neither side, took that opportunity to seize and

plunder the city of Worcester, and do a deal of mischief, for which he was afterwards sent prisoner to the Tower. The army of the barons easily retook what had been taken, and marched towards London, where JOHN MANSEL lieutenant of the tower, fearing he should be severely handled by the barons, for he was the most special counsellor the King and Queen had, ran away by stealth. The King likewise, fearing lest the barons' army should besiege him in the Tower, by the mediation of some that were afraid as well as he, yielded to an agreement with the barons, though it afterwards proved to be but short-lived; and promised to keep the provisions of Oxford: but the queen, instigated by a feminine malice, opposed it all she could. The form of this peace between the King, the earl and barons, was upon these conditions: " First, that HENRY, son of the King of
" the Romans, (who was then the King's prisoner) should be released. Secondly, that all the
" King's castles throughout all England should
" be delivered up to the custody of the barons.
" Thirdly, that the provisions of Oxford be inviolably kept. Fourthly, That all foreigners
" by a set time should evacuate the kingdom,
" excepting those whose stay here should be allowed by common consent, as trusty to the
" realm.

“ realm. [Perhaps not a quarter of the number which we have in one naturalization act.] “ That
 “ for the time to come the natives of England,
 “ who are faithful and profitable to the realm,
 “ may have the ordering of all affairs under
 “ the King.”

THESE things being thus covenanted, in a little while after, pacts, promises, oaths notwithstanding, several knights on the King's part stored Windfor Castle with a great quantity of provisions and arms, and they and the prince begun a new war. This war lasted with great variety of strange successes on both sides for several years, till the earl of Leicester was overthrown and slain in the battle of Evesham. Upon which the historian says; “ And thus ended his labours that
 “ great man Earl SIMON, who spent, not only
 “ his, but himself in behalf of the oppressed, in
 “ asserting a just cause, and maintaining the
 “ rights of the realm. He undertook this cause,
 “ in which he fought to the death, by the advice, and at the instance of the blessed ROBERT
 “ GROSTHEAD bishop of Lincoln, who constantly
 “ affirmed, that all that died for it were crowned with martyrdom.”

AFTER

AFTER this deciding battle the prince followed his blow, by advising his father to call a parliament forthwith, before his victory cooled ; which accordingly met at Winchester, September 8. whereas the fight was August 5, before. In this parliament they did what they would with the earl's broken and dispersed party : " The chief
" of them were imprisoned to be punished at the
" King's will ; the city of London disfranchised
" for their rebellion ; all that took part with
" Earl SIMON disinherited, whose lands the King
" presently bestowed upon those that had stuck
" faithfully by him, as a reward of their merit." OTTOBON the legate, also called a council at Northampton, and there excommunicated all the bishops and clergy that had aided and favoured Earl SIMON against the King ; namely, the bishops of Winchester, London, Worcester, and Chester : of whom the bishop of Worcester poorly died [vilitèr] in a few days after this sentence ; but the other three went to Rome to make their peace with the pope. In short, he excommunicated all others whatsoever, that had been against the King.

THE disinherited barons thought never the worse of their cause for this overthrow, but still
continued

continued in arms for three years after. And though they were forced to fly from place to place, and live as they could, yet they seemed to be the conquerors. For their answer to the legate's message to them in the isle of Ely, shews them to be men of great wisdom, integrity, and constancy; and their demands likewise are like themselves. For they require the legate "to restore the council of the whole realm, which he had irreverently ejected out of the realm, the bishops of Winchester, London, and Chichester, men of great counsel and prudence, for want of whom the nation sunk. They require him to admonish the King to remove aliens from his council, by whom the land is held in captivity. That their lands may be restored them without redemption at seven years purchase, which was lately allowed them at Coventry. That the provisions of Oxford be kept. That hostages be delivered them into the isle of Ely, and they to hold that place peaceably for five years, while they shall see how the King performs his promises." And after this, they reckon up several grievances, as the collation of benefices upon strangers, which are for the livelihood and maintenance
of

of natives only, &c. All which they admonish the legate to see amended.

“ Thus they treat,” says DANIEL *, “ not like
 “ men, whom their fortunes had laid upon the
 “ ground, but as if they had been still standing;
 “ so much wrought either the opinion of their
 “ cause, or the hope of their party. But this
 “ *stubbornness* so exasperates the King, as the next
 “ year following he prepares a mighty army,
 “ besets the isle so that he shuts them up; and
 “ prince EDWARD, with bridges made of boats,
 “ enters the same, to whom some of them yield-
 “ ed themselves, and the rest were dispersed by
 “ flight.”

He needed not to have been at such a loss for
 a reason of these men's resolute behaviour, much
 less to have *miscalled it*, if he had needed the
 fourth article of their answer to the legate, which
 he has translated to loss. To the fourth they say,
 “ That their first oath was for the profit of the
 “ realm, and the whole church; and all the pre-
 “ lates of the kingdom have passed the sentence
 “ of excommunication against all that contravene

* Dan. p. 183

“ it: and being still of the same mind, they are
 “ ready prepared to die for the said oath. Where-
 “ fore they require the legate to recall his sen-
 “ tence of excommunication, otherwise they
 “ would appeal to the apostolic see, and even to a
 “ general council, or if need were, to the sovereign
 “ judge of all.”

Now they that had this sense of their duty, and of the public good, though they were lost men in the eye of the world, could not chuse but stand upon their terms; neither could they abate one jot of a righteous cause, which was all they had left to support them. And that was enough; for he that is in the right, is always superior to him that is in the wrong.

THE parliament at Winchester seems to have sat in hot blood, but that King's succeeding parliaments were far from suffering him to be absolute and arbitrary, “ though there was never a rebel
 “ amongst them.” For the parliament at Bury gave nothing but very smart denials to his and the legate's scurvy petitions, *petitiones pessimas*, as they called them, which were contained in eight articles. The first was, “ That the prelates and rectors of
 “ churches should grant him the tenths for three
 P “ years

“ years to come, and for the year last past, so
 “ much as they gave the barons for guarding the
 “ sea against strangers.” To this they gave
 answer, “ That the war began by unjust covetise,
 “ and is not yet over [the isle of Ely being not
 “ then reduced] and it were necessary to let alone
 “ such very bad petitions as these, and to treat
 “ of the peace of the realm, and to convert his
 “ parliament to the profit of church and king-
 “ dom, not to the extortion of pence, especially
 “ when the land is so far destroyed by the war,
 “ that it will be a long time, if ever, before it
 “ recover.” The seventh is in the pope’s behalf,
 for the speedy preaching up of a crusado through-
 out all England. To this they made answer,
 “ That the people of the land are in a great part,
 “ destroyed by the war; and if they should now
 “ engage in a crusado, few or none would be
 “ left for the defence of their country: whereby
 “ it is manifest, that the legate would have the
 “ natural progeny of the land into banishment,
 “ that strangers might the more easily conquer
 “ the land.” Art. VIII. Also it was said, “ That
 “ the prelates were bound to agree to all these
 “ petitions *volens volens*, because of their late oath
 “ at Coventry, where they swore they would aid
 “ our lord the King, all manner of ways they
 “ could

“ could possibly.” To this they made answer, “ That when they took that oath, they “ did not understand by it any other aid but “ ghostly and wholesome advice.” A very trim answer. And all the rest are much after the same fashion. And to conclude this whole reign, at his last parliament at Marleburgh, Magna Charta was confirmed in all its points.

THUS have I brought down the history of Magna Charta to the end of HENRY III. wherein you have a short, but punctual account of that affair, and the true face of things. For I have told the story with the same air the writer himself does, and have been so faithful in the relation, as to keep close to his very phrase; whereby, in several places, it is the worse English though the better history. As for the writer himself, he was the most able and sufficient, and the most competent that could be, writing upon the spot, and having all the advantages which, added to his own diligence, could give him true information. For he was historiographer royal to K. HENRY III. and invited by him to the familiarity of dining, and being in frequent conference with him; was directed by him to record several matters, and to set them down in indelible characters,

which, I believe, his will prove. And as to his integrity, no man can suspect him, unless it be for being partial on the court side, as being in their pay: but his writings shew that he was above that mean consideration; and though he gives the King a cast of his office where he can, and relates things to his advantage, yet he has likewise done right to the barons, and was a faster friend to truth than to either of them. And accordingly in King EDWARD the first's claim to a superiority over the kingdom of Scotland, this very writing is brought as authentic history concerning what passed at York, 35 HENRY III. and is cited by the name of *The Chronicle of St. Alban's*. In one thing he excels, which is owing to the largeness and freedom of his converse with persons of the first quality, that he not only records barely what was done, but what every body said upon all occasions, which (as BARONIUS says it is) makes it a golden book. For men's speeches give us great light into the meaning of their actions, which is the very inside of history.

IN this history of Magna Charta, the history of the barons' wars was necessarily involved, so that in writing one I must write both: for, as you see, they were wholly undertaken for recovering and maintaining

maintaining the rights of the kingdom contained in that charter, and were in affirmance of it. Whereby they that have been told the barons' wars were a rebellion, may know better; and every honest man will find their cause to be so just, that if he had lived in those days he must have joined in it; for so we did lately in the fellow to it, at the last revolution. It is well indeed for us, that our ancestors lived before us, and with the expence of their blood recovered the English rights for us, and saved them out of the fire; otherwise we had been sealed up in bondage, and should have had neither any English rights to defend, nor their noble example to justify such a defence, but should have been in as profound an ignorance that ever there were any such rights, as the barons themselves were of HENRY the first's charter. For in all the steps the barons took we followed them. Did they take arms for the security of their liberties? so did we. Did they withdraw their allegiance from an arbitrary and perjured King? so did we. Did they set another over his head, and proceed to the creation of a new King? so did we. And if we had miscarried in our affair, we had not been called rebels, but treated as such; and the bishop of London and all our worthies had made but a blue business of it,

it, without putting on the prince of ORANGE's livery. And therefore it is great ingratitude in those that receive any benefit or protection by this *happy revolution*, to blemish the cause of the barons, for it is the same they live by; and as for those that had a hand in it, to call the barons' cause *a rebellion*, is utterly unaccountable, and like men that are not of their own side.

LEAVING therefore, the proper work of reproaching and reviling both these as damnable rebellions, to the people of the court, and the harder work of proving them so, I shall undertake the delightful task of doing service to this present rightful government, and at the same time of doing right to the memory of our antient deliverers, to whom we owe all that distinguishes the kingdom of England from that of Ceylon. It had been wholly needless to have written one word upon this subject, if this affair had ever been set in a true light, as it lies in antiquity; or if our modern historians had not given a false turn to so much of the matter of fact as they have related, and ruined the text by the comment. Mr. DANIEL has done this very remarkably; for after he has given us enough of this history to justify the barons' proceedings, and they had gain-
ed

ed the establishment of Magna Charta, he begins his remarks upon it in these words*: "And in
 " this manner (though it were to be wished it had
 " not been in this manner) were recovered the
 " rights of the kingdom." Now, though if it
 had not been done in this manner, it had not been
 done at all; and though he allows it to be the re-
 covery of their own, *the rights of the kingdom*,
 which one would think a very just and necessary
 work; yet this shrug of a wish leaves an impres-
 sion upon his reader, as if the ways wherein they
 recovered them were unwarrantable. On the
 other side, King JOHN would not allow them to
 be the rights of the kingdom at any rate†, "But
 " vain, superstitious, unreasonable demands; the
 " barons might as well ask him his kingdom;
 " and he swore he would never grant them such
 " liberties, as should make himself to be a slave."
 So that I have two things to shew: First, That
 they were verily and indeed the kingdom's rights;
 and secondly, That they were very fairly reco-
 vered: and that the barons were in the right,
 both as to matter and substance, and no way re-
 provable for manner and form.

* *Dan. p. 144.*

† *Matt. Paris p. 254.*

THE charter of HENRY I. was what the barons went by, and so must we; where, towards the latter end, we find these words *: “ I restore you
 “ the law of King EDWARD, with those amend-
 “ ments my father made to it by the advice of
 “ his parliament.” Here was no new grant, he barely made restitution, and gave them back their own. And so we find it in his father’s time †.
 “ He grants them the self-same laws and cus-
 “ toms which his cousin EDWARD held before
 “ him.” Or, as ORDERICUS VITALIS, a Norman has it ‡, “ He granted to the English that
 “ they might persevere in the laws of their fathers.” So that in effect he granted Englishmen to be Englishmen, to enjoy the laws they were born to, and in which they were bred; their fathers’ laws, and their mother tongue. A country-man would call this a pig of their own sow. And yet this

* *Lagam regis Edwardi vobis reddo, cum illis emendationibus, quibus pater meus eam emendavit consilio baronum suorum.*

† *Ces sont les lois & les custumes que le reis Wil. grantat a tut le puple de Engleterre apres le conquest de la terre. Ice les mesmes que le reis Edward sun cousin tint devant lui. Ingulphus, p. 88.*

‡ *P. 507. Anglis concessit sub legibus perseverare patriis.*

grant

grant by way of charter, and under seal, whereby he gave them their own, and quitted all claim to it himself, was looked upon as the utmost confirmation and corroboration, and the last degree of settlement amongst the Normans. And therefore, though King WILLIAM was too strong for his own charter, and shamefully broke it, yet they covenanted with his son HENRY I. before they chose him King, that as soon as he was crowned he should give them another, which accordingly he did. In the same manner they dealt with King STEPHEN. And this made them covenant after the same manner with King JOHN before they admitted him to the crown; and so much insisted afterwards upon having his charter, and having their liberties secured and *fortified* with his seal, *figilla suo munitas*, as they termed it. For in those days, what was not under seal, was not thought good in law: and not long before in HENRY the second's time, the bishop of Lincoln, in a trial before the King, was for setting aside all the Saxon kings' charters granted to the Abby of St. Alban's, for want of a seal; till the King seeing a charter of HENRY I. which confirmed them all*, "Why here," says he, "is my grand-

* *In vitis abb. p. 79.*

Q

"father's

“ father’s seal; this seal is the seal of all the ori-
 “ ginal charters, as much as if it were affixed to
 “ every one of them.”—“ Which wise decision of
 “ a young King was thought like Solomon’s judg-
 “ ment in finding out the true mother. For the
 “ St. Alban’s men had no way of answering
 “ their adversaries objection, That all privileges
 “ that wanted seals are void, because they could
 “ not absolutely say there were no seals in
 “ the Saxon times, there being a charter of Eo-
 “ WARD the confessor, granted to Westminster
 “ abby with a seal to it.” But they might easily
 have bethought themselves that he was more than
 half a Norman.

Now these being the undoubted rights of the
 kingdom, their antient laws, and liberties, and
 birthright, we have the less reason to be solicitous
 in what manner they shall at any time recover
 them: let them look to that, who violently or
 fraudulently keep them from them. For it would
 be a ridiculous thing in our law, for a man to
 have an estate in land, and he could not come
 at it. The law will give him a way. If the law
 gives the King royal mines, it gives him a power
 to dig in any man’s land where they are, that he
 may come at his own. And so if a nation have
 rights,

rights, all that is necessary for the keeping and enjoying of them, is, by law, included in those rights themselves, as pursuant to them.

BUT, because this is a great point, and I would willingly leave it a clear one, I shall shew that the barons proceeded legally in their whole affair, and according to the known principles of the English government; and that all the pope's infallible bribe-arguments against them, which have been since plentifully transcribed, are nothing worth.

I MIGHT, indeed, content myself with the short blunt argument of Mr. SELDEN, who was known to have the learning of twenty men, and honesty in proportion. First, That the custom and usage of England is the law of England, as the usage of parliament is the law of parliament. Now the ancestors of K. JOHN's barons recovered their rights in the same way. This was done in WILLIAM the first's time, in the fourth year of his reign, when they * raised a great army; and

* Matt. Paris *in vit. Frederici abb.* p. 48. *Videntes igitur Angli rem agi pro capitibus, plures convocando exercitum numerosum ac fortissimum conflagaverunt.*

it was time, seeing that all they had lay at stake under a cruel and insolent prince. Whereupon* K. WILLIAM being in a bodily fear of basely losing the whole kingdom, which he had gained with the effusion of so much blood, and of being cut off himself, called a parliament to Barkhamsted, where he swore over again "To observe
 "inviolably the good, antient, approved laws of
 "the realm, and especially the laws of K. EDWARD." How inviolably he afterwards kept that oath, and how "he † enriched his Normans
 "with the spoils of his own natural men, the
 "English, who, of their own accord, preferred
 "him to the crown," I had rather the reader himself should find out, by his own perusal of that instructive piece of history. Secondly, The English government is upon covenant and contract. Now it is needless in leagues and covenants to say, what shall be done in case the articles are broken. If satisfaction be denied, the injured

* *Cœpit igitur rex vehementer sibi timere, ne totum regnum, quod tanti sanguinis effusione adquisierat, turpiter amitteret, etiam trucidatus.*

† *Leges violans memoratas, suos Normannos, in suorum hominum Anglorum naturalium qui ipsum sponte sublimaverunt provocationem, locupletavit.*

party must get it as he can. Taking of castles, ships, and towns, are not provided for and made lawful by any special article; but those things are always implied, and always done.

YET seeing pope INNOCENT III. in his bull for disannulling Magna Charta for ever, and in his excommunication of the barons, has afforded us his reasons for so doing, we can do no less than consider them. The weight of his charge against them is this: "That instead of endeavouring to
 " gain what they wanted by fair means, they
 " broke their oath of fidelity: that they who were
 " vassals presumed to raise arms against their
 " lord, and knights against their King, which
 " they ought not to have done, put case he had
 " unjustly oppressed them; and that they made
 " themselves both judges and executors in their
 " own cause: that they reduced him to those
 " straits, that whatsoever they durst ask, he durst
 " not deny; whereby he was compelled by force,
 " and that fear which is incident to the stoutest
 " man, to make a dishonourable and dirty agree-
 " ment with them, which was likewise unlawful
 " and unjust, to the great derogation and dimi-
 " nution of his own right and honour. Now
 " because," says the pope, "it is spoken to me
 " by

“ by the lord in the prophet, I have set thee up
 “ over nations and kingdoms, to pluck up and
 “ destroy, to build and to plant, he proceeds to
 “ damn as well the charter as the obligations
 “ and cautions in behalf of it ; forbidding the
 “ King under the penalty of an anathema to
 “ keep it, or the barons to require it to be kept.”

THE barons might well say that the pope went upon false suggestions ; for he is out in every thing. For first, there was no winning of King JOHN by seeking to him : he would not have granted them their liberties, if they had kissed his toe. The barons had really borne longer with him than they ought : for having stipulated to have their rights restored to them before they admitted him to the crown, it was too long to stay above fifteen years for them, and to suffer so much mischief to be done in the mean time through their neglect. In the third year of his reign, they met indeed at Leicester, and used a sort of negative means to come at their rights ; for they sent him word, “ That unless he would restore
 “ them their rights, they would not attend him
 “ into France.” But upon this, as Hoveden says, the King using ill counsel, required their castles ; and beginning with WILLIAM ALBINET,
 demanded

demanded his castle of Beauvoir. WILLIAM delivers his son in pledge, but kept his castle. And so upon several occasions, they were forced to deliver up for hostages their sons, nephews, and nearest of kin. And thus he tyrannized over them, till the archbishop put them into a right method: and when at last they had agreed to demand their rights, and had demanded them, they staid for an answer from Christmas to Easter; for so long he demurred upon what he was bound to have done above fifteen years before, and then gave them a flat denial. So that all the world, saving his holiness, must say, that the barons were not rash upon him.

NOR secondly, that the barons had no regard to their oath of fidelity*. For their oath of fidelity was upon this condition, that Earl JOHN should restore all men their rights; and upon the faith which his commissioners solemnly made to them that thus it should be, they swore fidelity to him at Northampton. So that King JOHN had no right at all to this early oath of fidelity, because he himself would not keep covenant, nor fulfil the terms and conditions upon which it was

* *Juramento fidelitatis omnino contempto.*

made.

made. The * bargain was, Earl JOHN should restore all men their rights; upon this they were sworn: but Earl JOHN did not nor would not restore all men their rights; and therefore it was Earl JOHN himself that released them from their oath, and gave it them again. For I never heard of a covenant on one side. The morrow after his coronation, he received their homages and fealties over again, but that was the counterpart of his coronation-oath. And that again he bitterly broke; though when he was adjured not to presume to receive the crown, unless he meant to fulfill his oath, he then promised, "That by the help of God, he would keep all that he had sworn *bona fide*." How he kept that part which concerned the church, no way concerns this discourse, because he was at this time the pope's white boy, having before given him his kingdoms of England and Ireland, and had then sent him money to confound the barons and charter. But the other two thirds of that oath which concerned the people, I will here set down, that

* *Et fecerunt illis fidem, quod comes Johannes jura sua redderet universis; sub tali igitur conventionem comites & barones comiti memorato fidelitatem contra omnes homines juraverunt.*

every body who has read his reign, may see how truly and faithfully he kept it*. “That he would “destroy the bad laws, and establish good ones “in their room, and administer right justice “in the realm of England.” His not keeping the oath to destroy perverse laws, and substitute good, was the present controversy and quarrel which his barons had with him. For the whole meaning of the charter was to abolish all the ill depraved laws and customs that had been introduced, and to restore the good, antient and approved laws of the kingdom instead of them. But the pope, amongst other proposals he made, would fain have prevented and baffled the charter by this expedient; “That King JOHN should “be bound to revoke all abuses introduced in his “time.” This was a lame business indeed, when the oppressed barons wanted to be relieved from the tyrannous usages introduced in former reigns, and from a succession of evils. King JOHN by his coronation-oath was bound to destroy and abolish all the bad laws that were before him, and so are our Kings to this day, and not to make a former tyrannous reign a pattern. The barons might in-

* *Et quod perverfis legibus destructis, bonas substitueret; & rectam justitiam in regno Angliæ exerceret.*

deed have had all King JOHN's later grievances redressed, and yet have perished under the weight of such as were in his brother RICHARD's reign. After DANIEL has reckoned up several intolerable exactions and grievances in that reign, he has these words. " And with these vexations (saith Hoveden) all England, from sea to sea, was reduced to extreme poverty; and yet it ended not here: another torment is added to the confusion of the subjects by the justices of the forests, who not only execute those hideous laws introduced by the Norman, but impose others of more tyrannical severity, as the memory thereof being odious, deserve to be utterly forgotten; having afterwards by the hard labour of our noble ancestors, and the goodness of more regular princes, been asswaged, and now out of use." This deceitful remedy of the pope's therefore would have undone the barons, for such a partial information of abuses would have established all the rest; according to that known maxim, *Exceptio firmat regulam in casibus non exceptis.*

To return to King JOHN's oath; neither did he keep that branch of it which relates to the administration of true and upright justice: unless you will

will allow the destroying of a brave baron, WILLIAM BRAUSE, and the famishing of his wife and two sons in Windsor Castle, for a rash word of her's; and the putting the archdeacon of Norwich into a sheet of lead, and several such barbarities, to be choice and eminent instances of it. So that when the pope charges the barons with the breach of their oath of fidelity to King JOHN, it is unknown to me that they owed him any; which King JOHN himself seemed to mistrust, when after the barons' demand of their liberties, he used that fruitless precaution of causing his whole kingdom to swear fidelity to him, and renew their homages. For what signified this swearing to him never so often, while he himself was breaking the original contract, and rendering all their fidelities meer nullities, by destroying the foundation of them, and the only consideration upon which they were made? It is, as LAUD says, "A covenant is a knot, you need not loose both ends of it, but untying one end you unty both." And such is the mutual bond of li- geance betwixt King and people, it is conditional and reciprocal: and therefore it was impossible for King JOHN's subjects to be bound while he was loose. That the fidelity of King's and subjects to each other is mutual, conditional, reci-

procal, and dependent, I shall prove by the authority of two Kings, who very well knew how that matter stood. It is a solemn covenant of theirs, which because it is short, I will here transcribe*. They both of them enter a saving for the fidelity they owe to their subjects, so long as their subjects shall keep their fidelity to them." Here we have that expressed which was ever implied: for whether the *Quamdiu, eousque, quousque, usquequo*, be in or out, it matters not. At K. STEPHEN's first parliament at Oxford, he made them a charter, which he

* *Ego Lodowicus Rex Francorum, & ego Rex Anglorum volumus ad omnium notitiam pervenire, nos Deo inspirante, promississe, & juramento confirmasse, quod simul idimus in servitium crucifixi, & ituri Hierosolymam, suscipiemus signaculum sanctae crucis: & amodo volumus esse amici ad invicem, ita quod uterque nostrum alteri conservabit vitam, & membra & honorem terrenum, contra omnes homines. Et si quacunque persona alteri nostrum malum facere presumpserit, ego Henricus juro Lodowicum Regem Francorum dominum meum contra omnes homines, & ego Lodowicus juro Regem Anglorum Henricum contra omnes homines, sicut fidelem meum, salva fide, quam debemus hominibus nostris, quamdiu nobis fidelitatem servabunt. Acta autem sunt hec apud Minantcourt septimo octobris. A. D. 1177. M. P. p. 133. Forma pacti inter Anglorum & Gallorum reges initi.*

promised

promised before his coronation, whereby he freed both clergy and laity from all their grievances wherewith they had been oppressed, and confirmed it by his oath in full parliament: where likewise, says DANIEL, the bishops swore fealty unto him, but with this condition, "So long as he observed the tenor of this charter." Now it seems this clause of abundant cautelousness was not in the oath of the earls and barons, neither needed it: for if K. STEPHEN broke with his people, of course their fealty ceased. This we have again expressed in words at length, in the solemn charter of the same King, wherein by consent of parliament he adopted and made HENRY II. his heir, and gave him and his heirs the realm of England*.

THEIR duty to him ceased till he mended his fault, and returned again to keep his covenant; *Quousque errata corrigat, & ad prædictam passionem observandam redeat. Paulo infra.* There is no

* *Comites etiam & barones mei ligium homagium duci fecerunt salva mea fidelitate, quamdiu vixero & regnum tenuero: simili lege quod si ego a prædictis recederem, omnino a servitio meo cessarent quousque errata corrigerem. Brompton, Col. 1038.*

need of these words at length at the end of every charter or petition of right, in case it be broken, which we find in the close of HENRY the third's charter, *Anno Regni 42. Liceat omnibus de Regno nostro contra nos insurgere, & ad gravamen nostrum opem & operam dare, ac si nobis in nullo tenerentur**. "All the men in our realm may rise up
 " against us, and annoy us with might and main,
 " as if they were under no obligation to us:" because in the Polish coronation-oath, which is likewise in words at length, we have a plain hint why they had better be omitted and suppressed†.
 " And in case I break my oath, (which God for-
 " bid) the inhabitants of this realm shall not be
 " bound to yield me any obedience." Now this God forbid, and the harsh supposition of breaking an oath at the very making of it, is better omitted, when it is for every body's ease rather to suppose that it will be faithfully kept; especially seeing that in case it be unhappily broken, the very natural force and virtue of a contract does of itself supply that omission. Neither is it practised in articles of agreement and covenants

* *In Archiv. London.*

† *Quod si sacramentum meum violavero (quod absit) incolae hujus Regni nullam nobis obedientiam praestare tenebuntur.*
 under

under hand and seal between man and man, to make a special provision, that upon breach of covenants they shall sue one another either at common-law, or in chancery: because this implies that one of them should prove an knave and dishonest; but when that come to pass, I am sure Westminster-Hall cannot hold them.

IN like manner the barons, after they had borne with K. JOHN's breach of covenant very much too long, swore, at last, at the high altar at St. Edmondsbury, "That if he refused them
 " their liberties, they would make war upon him
 " so long as to withdraw themselves from their
 " fidelity to him, till such time as he confirmed their laws and liberties by his charter*." And afterwards, at the demand of them, they say, that which is a very good reason for their resolve, " That he had promised them those antient laws
 " and liberties, and was already bound to the observation of them by his own proper oath." So that the pope was quite out, when he says the barons set at nought, and broke their oath of fidelity to K. JOHN, for they only helped him to keep his.

* *Matt. Paris, p. 253.*

THE next thing objected against the barons is this: "That they who were vassals presumed to
"raise arms against their lord, and knights
"against their King; which they ought not to
"have done, although he had unjustly oppressed
"them. And that they made themselves both
"judges and executors in their own cause." All
which is very easily answered. First, It was
always lawful for vassals to make war upon their
lords, if they had just cause. So our Kings did
perpetually upon the Kings of France, to whom
they were vassals all the while they held their ter-
ritories in that kingdom. And by the law of Eng-
land, an inferior vassal might fight his lord in a
weighty cause, even in duel. The pope seems
here willing to depress the barons with low titles,
that he may the better set off the presumption of
their proceedings; but before I have ended, I
shall shew what vassals the barons were. I should
be loth to say, that the Kings of England were
not all along as good men as their lords of France,
or that the barons of England were not good
enough to assert their rights against any body;
but this I do say, that it was always lawful for
vassals to right themselves even while they were
vassals, and without throwing up their homage
and fealty: for that was never done till they de-
clared

clared themselves irreconcilable enemies, and were upon terms of defiance. Thus the Kings of England always made war in defence of their rights, without throwing up their homage and fealty, till that last bitter enraged war of HENRY II. wherein he had that ill success as broke his heart, and forced him to a dishonourable peace, the conclusion of which he out-lived but three days. Amongst other things, he did homage to the King of France, because, in the beginning of this war, he had rendered up his homage to him. Matt. Paris takes notice of it as an extraordinary thing, and I do not remember it done before. *Quia in principio bujus guerra homagium reddiderat regi Francia, p. 151.* The same was practised by HENRY III. towards that great man RICHARD, the marshal; he sent him a defiance by the bishop of St. David's into Wales. Upon which, the marshal tells friar AGNELLUS, the King's counsellor in that long conference before mentioned, *Unde homo suus non fui, sed ab ipso homagio per ipsum absolutus.* This was reciprocal from the lord to the vassal, or from the vassal to the lord, as he found cause. And therefore, K. JOHN's vassals, who are here represented as if they were food for tyranny, and bound by their places to be unjustly oppressed, for so the pope

S

allows

allows the case; I say, these vassals, if they had been so minded, instead of being contented with a charter at Running-Mead, might soon have been quite off of K. JOHN, by resigning their homage to him. This K. EDWARD the second's vassals did in manner and form by the mouth of WILLIAM TRUSSEL, a judge, in these words *:

" I WILLIAM TRUSSEL, in the name of all men
 " of the land of England, and of the whole par-
 " liament procurator, resign to thee, EDWARD,
 " the homage formerly made to thee; and hence-
 " forward I defy thee, and prive thee of all royal
 " power and dignity, and shall never hereafter
 " be tendant on thee as King." This was the standing law long before the time of K. JOHN's barons; for the parliament in the 10th of RICHARD II. sent the King a solemn message, that † by an antient statute, they had power to depose

* *Ego Willielmus Trussel, vice omnium de terra Anglia, & totius parliamenti procurator, tibi Edwarde reddo homagium prius tibi factum; & extunc diffido te, & privo omni potestate regia & dignitate, nequaquam tibi de cætero tanquam regi pariturus.* Knyghton, col. 2549.

† Knyghton, col. 2683. *Habent enim ex antiquo statuto, & de facto non longe retroactis temporibus experienter quod dolendum est habito, si rex ex maligno consilio quocunque vel inepta*
 a King

a King that would not behave himself as he ought, nor be ruled by the laws of the realm: and they instance in this deposing of EDWARD II. but withal, as a late and modern thing, in respect of the antiquity of that statute. Such an irrefragable testimony and declaration of a parliament so long since, concerning what was ordained in the eldest ages long before, plainly shews the English constitution, and is a full confutation of the late K. JAMES's memorial at Ryfwick. And this power seems to be well known to K. JOHN's barons, who, when there is occasion, talk familiarly of *creating a new King*, and afterwards were forced to do it, though now they only sought their charter, and did not *attempt to take from him his kingdom*, which the pope indeed says, but it was not true.

So far have I cleared them from presumption as vassals: now as knights. It is true, their tenure was to assist the King against the enemies of the realm; but how, if he turned so himself? Unjust oppression, which is the pope's own supposi-

contumacia aut contemptu, seu proterva voluntate singelari se alienaverit a populo suo, nec voluerit per jura regni, & statuta, & laudabiles ordinationes gubernari & regulari, extunc licitum est eis ipsum Regem de regali solio abrogare, &c.

tion, is no friendly part. Must they then aid him against the realm, and be the instruments of his unjust oppression upon themselves? Their duty and service was to the realm in chief, to him it was subaltern: and therefore, knowing their duty better than the pope did, they all left K. JOHN but seven, before he would consent to the parliament at Running-Mead. For it is plain the pope would have had them passive-obedient knights, and a contradiction to their very order, whereby for certain they had forfeited their spurs.

“YEA, but the barons were judges and ex-
 “cutors in their own cause.” And who can help it, if they were made so in the first institution, and from the very foundation of this government? As soon as the Saxons had chosen from among themselves one King, this the Mirror says expressly, was the jurisdiction of the King’s companions. For though the King had no peer, yet if he wronged any of his people, it was not fit that he that was party should be likewise judge, nor for the same reason, any of his commissioners: and
 therefore

therefore these companions were, by their place, to right the subjects in parliament *.

THE same is more largely set down by the lord chief justice BRACTON; and therefore I will transcribe it in his own words †.

* *Mirror*, p. 9. Et tout soit que le Roye ne devoit aver nul peere en la terre, pur ceo nequidant que le Roy de son tort, s'il pecha vers ascun d'son people, ne nul de ses commissaires, poit e. judge & partee, couvient per droit que le Roy ust compaignions pur oyer & terminer aux parliaments trestouts les breves & plaints de torts de le Roy, de la Roigne, & de leur infans, & de eux especialment de que torts len ne poit aver autrement commun droit.

† *Rex autem habet superiorem, Deum s. Item legem, per quam factus est rex: Item curiam suam, videlicet comites, barones, quia comites dicuntur quasi socii regis; & qui habet socium habet magistrum: & ideo si Rex fuerit sine fræno, i. sine lege, debent ei frænum ponere, nisi ipsimet fuerint cum rege sine fræno; & tunc clamabunt subditi, & dicent, Domine Jesu Christe, in chamo & fræno maxillas eorum confringe; ad quos Dominus, vocabo super eos gentem robustam & longinquam & ignotam, cujus linguam ignorabunt, quæ destruet eos, & evellat radices eorum de terra, & a talibus judicabuntur, quia ubditos noluerunt juste judicare; & in fine, ligatis manibus & pedibus eorum, mittet eos in caminum ignis & tenebras exteriores, ubi erit fletus & stridor dentium. Lib. II. cap. 16. f. 34.*

HE says, the King has these above him, God; also the law, which makes him a King; also his parliament, namely, the earls and barons, who ought to bridle a lawless King, &c. In this large passage you plainly see that what the barons did was so far from being the absurd and presumptuous usurpation of making themselves judges and executors in their own cause, that it was their bounden duty. It was not only lawful for them to restrain and bridle a lawless King, but it was incumbent upon them under the greatest penalties, and neither lawful nor safe for them to let it alone. So that here the barons were hard beset; the pope delivers them up to Satan for what they did, and they had exposed themselves to the vengeance of God, and going to hell, if they had not done it. But they chose to do their duty to God and their distressed country, and to venture the causeless curse from Rome.

I MIGHT multiply quotations out of Fleta and others to the same purpose, but what I have set down is sufficient; and therefore I shall rather take this occasion to admire the wisdom of the English constitution, which seems to be built for perpetuity.

perpetuity. For how can a government fail which has such lasting principles within it, and a several respective remedy lodged in the very bowels of it? The King has a known power of causing all his subjects to keep the law; that is an effectual remedy against lawlessness and anarchy: and the parliament has a power, if need be, to hold the King to the observation of the laws; and that is a preservative against tyranny.

THIS is the Palladium of our government, which cannot be stolen as their's was from Troy; for the keepers of it are too many to be killed, because every Englishman has an interest in it: for which reason neither can it be bought and sold, so as to make a title; and a man of a moderate understanding may easily undertake that it shall never be preached away from us. And hereby England is rendered the noblest commonwealth and kingdom in the world. I name commonwealth first, because K. JAMES I. in one of his speeches to the parliament, says, "I am the great servant of the commonwealth." From hence I infer, that this was a commonwealth before he was the great servant of it. Great and little is not the dispute; for it is for the honour and interest of so glorious a state, to have a prince

as great as they can make him. As, to compare great things with small, it is for the honour of the city to have a magnificent lord-mayor. And K. JAMES told us no news in naming his office; for this is the country, as FORTESCUE's whole book shews us, "Where the King is appointed for the realm, and not the realm for the King." And I can shew a hundred places in antiquity, where the body of this nation is called republic; as for instance, where Bracton says, laws are made *communi republicæ sponsione*: though I confess, in relation to a King, it oftener goes by the prouder name of realm. But this constitution of state and regal government, which is the constitution of England, cannot be so well understood by any other one book, as by my lord chancellor FORTESCUE's, which was a book written for the nonce, and to instruct the prince into what sort of government he was like to succeed. As directly opposite to this government, he has painted the French government, made up of *men at arms and edicts**. The prince in the conclusion of it, "Does not doubt but this discourse of the chancellor's will be profitable to the Kings of England, which hereafter shall be:" and I am

* Fortescue, p. 79.

fatished,

fatisfied, that no wise King, after he has read that little book, would change governments with the Grand Seignior.

AND, as the prince has recommended the usefulness of this discourse to all future Kings, so I heartily recommend it to the careful perusal of all Englishmen, who having seen a succession of bad reigns, think there is somewhat in the mill, and that the English form of government is amiss; whereas the fault lies only in the mal-administration; or if there should happen to be any flaw or defect in any of the occasional laws, it may easily, and ought to be rectified every parliament that sits down, as the book says.

I NEVER heard of any that disliked the English government but some of the prince's progenitors Kings of England; who, thinking themselves shackled and manacled by the English laws, endeavoured to throw off this state-yoke, that they might rule or rather rage over their subjects * *in regal wise only*, not considering that to govern the people by the laws of the state, *is not a yoke, but liberty*; and the greatest security, not only to the

* *Moliti sunt hoc jugum politicum abjicere.*

subject, but to the King himself, and in great measure rids him of care. But the same author, p. 88. tells us the success of this attempt *: these progenitors of the prince, who thus endeavoured, with might and main, to be rid of this *State-government*, not only could not compass that larger power which they grasped at, but risked both themselves and their kingdom. As we ourselves have likewise seen in the late K. JAMES. Or, on the other side, perhaps it is disliked by some who have seen no other effects of it, but what have proceeded from the Scotch King-Craft, which is worse than no government at all, and have imputed those corruptions and disorders to the English frame of government; or at least, think that it has no remedy provided against them: and so have fallen into the waking dreams of I know not what, for want of understanding the true of the English government. But I can assure these persons, that upon farther search they will find it quite otherwise, and that the English frame of government cannot be mended; and the old land-marks better placed, than we could have laid them with our own hands; and withal, that all new projects come a thousand

* *Qui sic politicum regimen abicere satagerunt.*

years too late. For England has been so long formed to its own laws, and its laws to it, that we are all of a piece: and both in point of gratitude to our ancestors who have spent their lives to transmit them to us, and out of love to posterity to convey them a thing more valuable than their lives, we cannot think much at any time to venture our own. I am clearly of Sir ROBERT PHILIPS's mind in the parliament *quarto Caroli*: "Nothing so endangers us with his majesty, as that opinion that we are antimonarchically affected; whereas, such is and ever has been our loyalty, if we were to chuse a government, we should chuse this monarchy of England above all governments in the world." Which we lately have actually done, when no body could claim it, for they could only claim under a forfeited title: and at a time when too much occasion had been given to the whole nation to be out of conceit with Kings.

As for the remaining part of the pope's trash, it is not worth answering. "That the barons reduced K. JOHN to those straits, that what they dared to ask, he dared not to deny." For they asked him nothing but their own, which he ought not to have denied them, nor have put

them to the trouble of coming so hardly by it. Nor was the granting of Magna Charta *a foul and dishonourable composition*, but just and honourable, and therefore honourable because it was just. As for the compulsion there was in it, a man that must be made to be honest, cannot complain of that himself, nor any body for him. In this whole affair, the pope's apostolical authority went farther than his arguments.

It is the lasting honour of Magna Charta and the barons, that they were run down by a pope and a general council, which were the first that established transubstantiation *, and the deposing of Kings for heresy, either their own, or even that of their subjects, if they suffered them in their dominions: in which case the pope was to absolve their subjects from their allegiance, to set up a crusado against them, and to dispose of their kingdoms to catholic free-booters. This was a powerful transforming metamorphosing council; but they that could turn a bit of bread into a god, might more easily turn better christians than themselves into Saracens. I take the

* *Lateran. sub Innocent III.*

decrees of that general council to be a standing declaration of war, yea a holy war, against all protestant princes and states to the end of the world; whereby all papists are the public and declared enemies of that part of mankind, whom they have been pleased to call heretics: for it is the established doctrine of their church.

HAVING disproved LAUD's first charge against Magna Charta, *That it had an obscure birth*, as if it had been base-born, illegitimate, or upstart; I proceed to the second, *That it was fostered by an ill nurse*. In answer to which, it would be sufficient to say, that it was fostered by a succession of kings, and above thirty parliaments; and if that be an ill nurse, let all the world find a better. But I shall be somewhat more particular, and shew what great care was taken of it in after-ages. In EDWARD the first's time, after it had been confirmed three times, ordered to be twice a year read in churches, was sealed with the bishops' and barons' seals as well as the King's own, and sworn to by the barons and others*, that they

* *Knyghton, col. 2523. Et ad ejus observationem consilium suum & auxilium fidele praeftabunt in perpetuum.*

would

would for ever afford their counsel and faithful aid towards their having it kept; I say, after all this, which was good nursing on the parliament's part, it had like to have been overlaid by the pope: for when the King thought his whole business in Scotland was settled, he entered into an intrigue with pope CLEMENT V. very much to the prejudice of Magna Charta; but Mr. DANIEL shall have the honour of telling the story *. “ This pope was native of Bourdeaux, and so the more
 “ regardful of the King's desire, and the King
 “ more confident of his favour; which, to entertain and increase, he sends him a whole furniture of all vessels for his chamber of clean
 “ gold: which great gift so wrought with the
 “ pope, as he let loose his lion, untied the King
 “ from the covenant made with his subjects concerning their charters confirmed to them by
 “ his three last acts of parliament, and absolved
 “ him from his oath: an act of little piety in the
 “ pope, and of as little conscience in the King,
 “ who (as if he should now have no more need
 “ of his subjects) discovered with what sincerity
 “ he granted what he did.

* *Dan. p. 200. A. Reg. 33.*

“ BUT suddenly hereupon, there fell out an
 “ occasion that brought him back to his right
 “ orb again, made him see his error, and reform
 “ it; finding the love of his people lawfully or-
 “ dered, to be that which gave him all his pow-
 “ er and means he had, and to know their sub-
 “ stances were intermutual. The news of a
 “ new King made and crowned in Scotland, was
 “ that which wrought the effect hereof. For
 “ upon this he went to Scotland, and not long
 “ after wintering at Carlisle, held his last parlia-
 “ ment there: wherein, says DANIEL, the state
 “ was mindful of the pope’s late action, and got
 “ many ordinances to pass for reformation of the
 “ abuses of his ministers, and his own former
 “ exactions.” In the next reign it was confirmed
 in the third year of EDWARD II. and afterwards
 greatly violated; but every body knows what
 came of that.

IN K. EDWARD the third’s time it received ma-
 ny noble confirmations; and amongst the rest,
 in the forty second year of his reign, it is provid-
 ed, that all statutes made against Magna Charta
 are void. In the fourth year of RICHARD II. it
 was appointed by the archbishop and lord chan-
 cellor

cellor to be read at the opening of the parliament, as if it were the foundation and standard of our laws; and in short, it was confirmed over and over again in the succeeding reigns: so that it was always common law, it is now become a great part of the statute law; the statute called *The great charter of the liberties of England*, and *The laudable statute of Magna Charta*. With this honour and renown it descended all along down to us, till it fell into the very dregs of tyranny, and then they pick quarrels with it for its birth and breeding.

Now to strip it out of LAUD's disguising cant of an obscure birth and ill nursing, the plain notion of Magna Charta is this: It is a summary of the native and inherent rights of Englishmen, which the Norman Kings, by granting afterwards by charter, bound themselves not to break in upon and invade: so that it was only a Norman-fashioned security, that these rights should not be violated. But we do not hold these rights by charter; no, not by the old dear-bought parchment and wax; for they are the birthright of Englishmen, which no kings could ever give or take away: they are, as they are called 25 EDWARD III. *The franchises of the land*, and every Englishman,

man, by being born in the land, is born to them. And these original rights being a better inheritance to every Englishman than his private patrimony, how great soever, and being transmitted down to posterity by the hard labour, sweat, and blood of our ancestors, they are the *children's bread*: and it is not meet for us to take the children's bread and cast it away.



ALFONSO COMPTON

man, by being born in the East is born to
and that he should be a man of letters
and to every one of his kind the power
two, now the world is a different place
to be to be a man of letters is a different
kind of one and another, and the one
man, and it is not true for the world is
different and it is not true for the world is

C A P I T U L A

Super quibus facta est

MAGNA CHARTA

REGIS JOHANNIS,

Ex MS. Archiep. Cantuar. Fol. 14.

Quæ etiam authenticè cum sigillo
extant in manibus Reverendiss. pa-
tris *Gilb. Burnet*, Episc. Salisbu-
riensis.

ISTA sunt capitula que barones pe-
tunt, & dominus Rex concedit, signa-
ta sigillo Johannis Regis.

Post decessum antecessorum heredes plene
etatis habebunt hereditatem suam per anti-
quum reledium exprimendum in charta.

Heredes

THE
ARTICLES
Upon which the
GREAT CHARTER
OF
KING JOHN
WAS FRAMED.

Taken out of a Manuscript of the
ABp. of *Cant.* Fol. 14. The Ori-
ginal whereof, with the Great Seal
annexed, is extant in the hands
of Dr. *Gilb. Burnet*, now Bishop
of *Salisbury* *.

THESE are the particulars which the
barons demand, signed with K. JOHN's
seal.

HEIRS of full age shall have their inheritance
after the decease of their ancestors, paying the
antient relief to be expressed in the charter.

* *Anno 1710.*

Heredes qui intra etatem sunt & fuerunt in custodia, cum ad etatem pervenerint, habebunt hereditatem suam sine relevio & fine.

Custos terre heredis capiet rationabiles exitus, consuetudines & servitia sine destructione & vassa hominum & rerum suarum. Et si custos terre fecerit destructionem & vassam amittat custodiam, & custos sustentabit domos, parcos, vivaría, stagna, molendina, & cetera ad terram illam pertinentia de exitibus terre eiusdem. Et ut heredes ita maritentur ne disparagentur, & per consilium propinquorum de consanguinitate sua.

Re vidua det aliquid pro dote sua, vel maritagio mariti sui, sed maneat in domo sua per XC. dies post mortem ipsius: & infra terminum illum assignetur ei dos, & maritadium statim habeat & hereditatem suam. Rex vel ballivus non saisset terram aliquam pro debito dum catalla debitoris sufficient, nec plegii debitoris distringantur dum capitalis debitor sufficit ad solutionem. Si vero capitalis debitor defecerit in solutione, si plegii voluerint habere debitoris do-

nec

HEIRS within age, and that have been in ward, shall have their inheritance, when they come at age, without paying relief or making fine.

THE guardian of an heir's land shall take the reasonable issues, customs, and services, without the destruction or waste of his men or goods. And if such guardian make destruction and waste, he shall lose the wardship, and the guardian shall keep in repair the houses, parks, ponds, pools, mills, and other appurtenances to the estate, out of the profits of the land: and shall take care that the heirs be married without disparagement, and by the advice of their near kindred.

THAT a widow shall give nothing for her dower or marriage after the death of her husband, but shall be suffered to dwell in her husband's house ninety days after his death; within which time her dower shall be assigned her, and she shall immediately have her marriage and her inheritance. The King nor his bailiff shall not seize any land for debt, if the debtor's goods be sufficient; nor shall the debtor's sureties be distrained upon, when the debtor himself is able to pay the debt. But if the debtor fail of payment, the sureties,

nec debitum illud persolvatur plene, nisi capitalis debitor monstrare poterit se esse in de quietum erga plegios.

Rex non concedit alicui baroni quod capiat auxilium de liberis hominibus suis, nisi ad caput suum redimendum, & ad faciendum primogenitum filium suum militem, ad primogenitam fillam suam maritandam, & hoc faciet per rationabile auxilium.

Ne aliquis majus servitium faciat de feodo militis quam inde debetur: ut communia placita non sequantur curiam domini Regis sed assignentur in aliquo certo loco, & ut recognitiones capiantur in ejusdem comitatibus in hunc modum. Ut Rex mittat duos justitiarios per quatuor vices in anno, qui cum quatuor militibus ejusdem comitatus electis per comitatem capiant assisas de nova dissassina, morte antecessoris, & ultima presentatione: nec aliquis ad hoc sit summonitus nisi juratores & due partes.

Ut liber homo amerceatur pro parvo debito secundum modum delicti, & pro magno debito secundum magnitudinem delicti, salvo

sureties, if they will, may have the debtor's lands till the debt be fully satisfied, unless the principal debtor can shew that he is quit against his sureties.

THE King shall not allow any baron to take aid of his free tenants, but for the redemption of his person, for the making his eldest son a knight, and towards the marriage of his eldest daughter once; and hereunto he shall have but a reasonable aid.

THAT none shall do more service for a knight's fee, than is due for the same. That common pleas shall not follow the King's court, but shall be holden in some certain place: and that recognitions be taken in their proper counties, and after this manner, viz. That the King shall send two justices four times a year, who, together with four knights of the same shire, chosen by the shire, shall take *assizes of novel disseisin, mordanceffer, and darrein presentment*: nor shall any be summoned hereunto, but the jurors and the two parties.

THAT a freeman shall be amerced for a small fault after the manner of the fault, and for a great fault according to the greatness of the fault,

bo contenenento suo. Villanus etiam amercietur, salvo vauagio suo, & mercator eodem modo, salva merchandisa, per sacramentum proborum hominum de visneto, ut clericus amercietur de laico feodo suo secundum modum aliorum predicatorum & non secundum beneficium ecclesiasticum.

Ne aliqua villa amercietur pro pontibus faciendis ad riparias, nisi ubi de iure antiquitus esse solebant.

Ne mensura vini, bladi, & latitudines pannorum, & rerum aliarum emendetur, & ita de ponderibus.

Ut assisa de nova disseisina & de morte antecessoris abbrevientur, & similiter de aliis assis.

Ut nullus vicecomes intromittat se de placitis ad coronam pertinentibus sine coronatoribus, & ut comitatus & hundreda sint ad antiquas firmas absque ullo incremento, exceptis dominicis maneriis Regis.

saving his contenment. A villain also shall be amerced saving his wainage, and in like manner a merchant saving his merchandize, by the oath of good men of the vicinage: that a clerk shall be amerced according to his lay-fee in manner aforesaid, and not according to his ecclesiastical benefice.

THAT no town be amerced for not making bridges nor banks, but where they have been of old time, and of right ought to be.

THAT the measure of wine, of corn, and the breadth of cloth, and the like, be rectified, and so of weights.

THAT *assizes of novel disseisin and mortdancer* be abbreviated, and so of other assizes.

THAT no sheriff shall intermeddle with pleas of the crown without the coroners; and that counties and hundreds shall be at the antient farms without any increase, except the King's own demesne manors.

Si aliquis tenens de Rege moriatur, licebit vicecomiti vel alio ballivo Regis saisire & inbreviare catallum ipsius per visum legalium hominum, ita tamen quod nihil inde amoveatur donec plenius sciatur si debet aliquid liquidum debitum domini Regis, & tunc debitum domini Regis persolvatur. Residuum vero relinquatur executoribus, ad faciendum testamentum defuncti. Et si nihil Regi debetur, omnia catalla cedent defuncto.

Si aliquis liber homo intestatus decesserit, bona sua per manum proximorum parentum suorum & amicorum, & per visum ecclesie, distribuuntur.

Ne vidue distringantur ad se maritandum dum volutrine sine marito vivere, ita tamen quod securitatem facient quod non maritabunt se sine assensu Regis, si de Rege teneant, vel dominorum suorum de quibus tenent.

Ne constabularius vel alius ballivus capiat blada vel alia catalla, nisi statim inde reddat, nisi respectum habere possit de voluntate venditoris.

Ne

If any tenant of the King die, the sheriff, or other the King's bailiff, may seize and enroll his goods and chattels, by the view of lawful men; but yet so as that nothing thereof be taken away, till it be fully known whether he owe any clear debt to the King: and then the King's debt shall be paid, and the residue shall remain to the executors to perform the testament of the dead. And if nothing be owing to the King, all the goods shall go to the use of the dead.

If any freeman die intestate, his goods shall be distributed by his nearest kindred and friends, and by the view of the church.

WIDOWS shall not be distrained to marry, if they are minded to live unmarried, provided they find sureties they will not marry without the King's assent, if they hold of the King, or without the consent of their lords of whom they hold.

No constable or other bailiff shall take any man's corn or other chattels, but he shall forthwith pay for the same, unless he may have respite by consent of the seller.

THAT

Ne constabularius possit distringere aliquem militem ad dandum denarios pro custodia castri si voluerit facere custodiam illam in propria persona, vel per alium probum hominem, si ipse tam facere non possit per rationabilem causam. Et si Rex eum duxerit in exercitum, sit quietus de custodia secundum quantitatem temporis.

Ne vir vel ballivus Regis, vel aliquis alius, capiat equos vel carectas alicujus liberi hominis pro carriagio faciendo nisi ex voluntate ipsius.

Ne Rex vel ballivus suus capiat alienum boscam ad castra vel ad alia agenda nisi per voluntatem ipsius cujus boscus fuerit.

Ne Rex teneat terram eorum qui fuerint convicti de feloniam, nisi per unum annum & unum diem; sed tunc reddatur domino feodi.

ut omnes videlli de cetero penitus depellantur in Camisligia & Hedeteoge & per totam Angliam.

Ne

THAT no constable shall distrain any knight to give money for the keeping of his castle, if he himself will do it in his own proper person, or by another sufficient man, if he may not do it himself for a reasonable cause. And if the King lead him in his army, he shall be discharged of castleward for the time.

No sheriff or bailiff of the King, nor any other person, shall take the horses or carts of any free-man to make carriage without his leave.

THE King, nor his bailiffs, shall not take any man's wood for castles or other occasions, but by licence of him whose the wood is,

THAT the King do not hold the lands of them that be convicted of felony, longer than a year and a day; after which they shall be delivered to the lord of the fee.

THAT all wears from henceforth be utterly put down in Thames and Medway, and throughout all England.

THAT

Ne breve quod vocatur Precipe de cetero fiat alicui de aliquo tenemento unde liber homo amittat curiam suam.

Si quis fuerit dissaissitus vel prolongatus per Regem sine iudicio de terris, libertatibus, & iure suo, statim ei restituatur; & si contentio super hoc orta fuerit, tunc inde disponatur per iudicium **XXI**. Baronum, & ut illi qui fuerint dissaissiti per promotorem vel fratrem Regis, certum habeant sine dilatione per iudicium parium suorum in curia Regis. Et si Rex debeat habere terminum aliorum cruce signatorum, tunc archiepiscopus & episcopi facient inde iudicium ad certam diem appellatione remoto.

Ne aliquid detur pro brevi inquisitionis de vita vel membris, sed libere concedatur sine pretio, & non negetur.

Si aliquis tenet de Rege per feodifirmam, per soccagium, vel burgagium: & de alio per servitium militis, dominus Rex non habebit custodiam militum de feodo alterius occasione burgagii, vel soccagii, vel feodifirme;

THAT the writ called Precipe be not, from henceforth, granted to any person of any freehold, whereby a freeman may lose his court.

If any be disseized or delayed by the King, without judgment, of lands, liberties, or other his right, he shall forthwith have restitution; and if any dispute arise upon it, it shall be determined by the judgment of the five and twenty barons. And such as have been disseized by the King's father, or his brother, shall have right immediately by the judgment of their peers in the King's court. And if the King must have the term of others that had taken upon them the cross for the holy land, the archbishop and bishops shall give judgment therein, at a certain day to be prefixed, without appeal.

THAT nothing be given for a writ of inquisition of life or member, but that it be freely granted without price, and be not denied.

If any hold of the King by fee-farm, by socage, or burgage, and of any other by knights-service, the King shall not have the custody of the heir, nor of his lands that are holden of the fee of another, by reason of such burgage, soc-

Y

cage

ne; nec debet habere custodiam burgagii, fœdagii vel feodifirme: & quod liber homo non amittat militiam suam occasione parvarum sergantisarum, sicuti de illis qui tenent aliquod tenementum, reddendo inde cultellos. vel sagittas vel huiusmodi.

Ne aliquis ballivus possit ponere aliquem ad legem simplici loquela sua ne testibus fidelibus.

Ne corpus liberi hominis capiatur nec imprisonetur, nec dissolvatur, nec utlagetur, nec exuletur, nec aliquo modo destruat.

Nec Rex eat vel mittat super eum vi nisi per iudicium parium suorum vel per legem terre.

Ne ius vendatur, vel differatur, vel vetitum sit.

Quod mercatores habeant saluum ire & venire ad emendum vel vendendum sine omnibus malis, per antiquas & rectas consuetudines.

Ne

age, or fee-farm; nor ought the King to have the custody of such burgage, soccage, or fee-farm: and no freeman shall lose his degree of knighthood by reason of petty serjeanties, as when a man holds lands, rendering therefore a knife, an arrow, or the like.

No bailiff shall put any man to his law upon his own bare saying, without faithful witnesses.

THAT the body of a freeman be not taken, or imprisoned, nor that he be disseized, nor outlawed, nor exiled, nor any way destroyed.

NOR that the King pass upon him, or imprison him by force, but only by the judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.

THAT right be not sold, nor delayed, nor denied.

THAT merchants have liberty to go and come safely to buy and sell, without any manner of evil tolls, by the old and lawful customs.

De scutagium vel auxilium ponatur in regno, nisi per commune concilium regni, nisi ad corpus Regis redimendum & primogenitum filium suum militem faciendum & filiam suam primogenitam semel maritandam, & ad hoc fiat rationabile auxilium. Simili modo fiat de scutagiis & auxiliis, de civitatibus que inde habent libertates, & ut civitas London, plene habeat antiquas libertates & liberas consuetudines suas tam per aquas quam per terras.

At liceat unicuique exire de regno, & redire, salva fide domini Regis, nisi tempore ierre per aliquod breve tempus propter communem utilitatem regni.

Si quis mutuo aliquid acceperit a Judeis plus vel minus, & moriatur antequam debitum illud solvatur, debitum non usurabit quamdiu heres infra etatem, de quocumque teneat. Et si debitum illud incidit in manus Regis, Rex non capiet nisi catalum quod continetur in charta

THAT no escuage or aid be laid upon the kingdom, but by the common-council of the kingdom; unless it be to redeem the King's person, or to make his eldest son a knight, or to marry his eldest daughter once; and for these a reasonable aid shall be given. That it be in like manner with respect to tallages and aids from the city of London, and other cities that have privileges therein: and that the city of London may fully enjoy her antient liberties, and free customs, as well by water as by land.

THAT it shall be lawful for any man to go out of the kingdom, and to return, saving his allegiance to the King, unless it be in time of war for a short time, for the common profit of the realm.

If any borrow money of a Jew, be it more or less, and die before the debt be paid, no interest shall be paid for the same, so long as the heir is under age of whomsoever he hold. And if the debt become due to the King, the King shall take no more than what is contained in the charter.

If

Si quis moriatur & debitum debeat Iudeis, uxor ejus habeat dotem suam: & si liberi remanserint, provideant iis necessaria secundum tenementum, & de residuo solbatur debitum, salvo servitio dominorum. Simili modo fiat de aliis debitis, & ut custos terre reddat heredi cum ad plenam etatem pervenerit, terram suam restauratam secundum quod rationabiliter poterit sustinere de exitibus terre ejusdem de carucis & mainagiis.

Si quis tenuerit de aliqua escaeta sicut de honore Wallingfor & Nottingham, Bonon & Lancaster, & de aliis escaetis que sunt in manu Regis, & sunt baronie, & obierit, heres ejus non dabit aliud relebium vel faciet aliud servitium quam faceret baroni, & ut Rex eodem modo eam teneat quo baro eam tenuit.

ut fines qui facti sunt pro dotibus, maritagis, hereditatibus & amerciamentis, injuste & contra legem terre, omnino condonentur, vel fiat inde per judicium ECC. baronum, vel per judicium majoris partis eorundem una cum archiepiscopo & aliis quos secum

If any man die and owe money to the Jews; his wife shall have her dower; and if he left children, necessaries shall be provided them according to the quantity of the freehold, and the residue shall go to pay off the debt, saving the services due to the lords. The like shall be observed in case of other debts; and when the heir comes of age, his guardian shall restore him his land as well stocked as he could reasonably afford out of the profits of the land, coming in by the plough and the cart.

If any man hold of any escheat, as of the honour of Wallingford and Nottingham, Bonon and Lancaster, or of other escheats, which are in the King's hand and are baronies, and die, his heir shall pay no other relief, nor perform any other service than he should have paid and performed to the baron; and that the King shall hold such escheats as the barons held them.

THAT fines made for dowers, marriages, inheritances and amerciaments, wrongfully and contrary to the law of the land, be freely remitted, or ordered by the judgment of the five and twenty barons, or of the major part of them, together with the archbishop and such as he shall call
to

ferum vocare voluerit, ita quod si aliquis
vel aliquid de FFA. fuerint in simili querela,
amoveantur, & alii loco illorum per resi-
duos de FFA. substituantur.

Quod obsides & charte reddantur que li-
berate fuerunt Regi in securitatem.

ut illi qui fuerint extra forestant non ve-
niant coram iustitiarium de foresta per com-
munes summonitiones, nisi sint in placito
vel plegii fuerint; & ut prave consuetudines
de forestis & de forestariis, & warennis, &
vicecomitibus, & viciariis emendentur per
FJA. milites de quolibet comitatu qui de-
bent eligi per probos homines ejusdem co-
mitatus.

ut Rex amoveat penitus de wallia paren-
tes & totam sequelam Gerardi de Aties quod
de cetero balliam non habent, scilicet En-
gelardum, Andr. Petrum, & Sigonem de
Cances, Sigonem de Cygon, Mattheum
de Martino et fratres ejus, et Gelfrid ne-
potem ejus, et Philippum de Marke.

Et

to him; provided that if one or more of the five and twenty have themselves any like complaint, that then he or they shall be removed, and others put in their rooms by the residue of the five and twenty.

THAT the hostages and deeds be restored, which were delivered to the King for his security.

THAT they that live out of the forest be not obliged to come before the justice of the forest by common summons, unless they be parties or pledges: and that the evil customs of the forests and foresters, warrens and sherriffs, and ponds, be redressed by twelve knights of each county, who shall be chosen by the good men of the county.

THAT the King remove wholly from the bailiffwick the kindred and whole dependance of GERARD D'ATIES, that hereafter they have no bailiffwick, to wit, ENGELAND, ANDREW, PETER, and GIGO DE CANCES, GIGO DE CYGON, MATTHEW DE MARTINO and his brethren, and GELFRID his nephew, and PHILIP DE MARK.

Et ut Rex amoveat alienigenos milites, stipendiarios, ballistarios et ruttarios, et servientes qui venerunt cum equis et armis ad nocumentum regni.

ut Rex faciat iusticiarios, constabularios, & vicecomites & ballivos de talibus qui sciant legem terre & eam velint bene observare.

ut barones qui fundaverunt abbacias unde habent chartas regum vel antiquam tenuram, habeant custodiam earum cum vacaverint.

Si Rex Walenses dissalserit vel elongaverit de terris, vel libertatibus, vel de rebus aliis in Anglia vel in Wallia, eis statim sine placito reddantur: & si fuerint dissaliti vel elongati de tenementis suis Anglicis per patrem vel fratrem Regis sine iudicio patriam suorum, Rex eis sine dilatione iustitiam exhibebit eo modo quo exhibet Anglicis iustitiam de tenementis suis Angl. secundum legem Angl. & de tenementis Wall. secundum legem Wall. & de tenementis Marchie secundum

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AND that the King put away the foreign soldiers, stipendiaries, slingers, and troopers and their servants, who came with horses and arms to the nuisance of the realm.

THAT the King make justiciaries, constables, sheriffs and bailiffs, of men that know the law of the land, and will cause it to be well observed.

THAT barons who have founded abbies, for which they have charters of Kings, or antient tenures, shall have the custody of them when they are vacant.

If the King has disseized the Welchmen, or esloined them from lands or liberties, or of other things in England or Wales, let them presently be restored to them without plea: and if they have been disseized or esloined from their English tenements by the King's father or his brother, without the judgment of their peers, the King shall without delay do them justice, as he does justice to Englishmen of their English tenements according to the law of England, and of Welsh tenements according to the law of Wales, and of tenements in the marches according to the law

secundum legem Marchie. Idem facient
Wallenses Regi & suis.

ut Rex reddat filium Lewelini & preterea
omnes obsides de Wallia, & chartas que ei
liberate fuerunt in securitatem pacis.

ut Rex faciat Regi Scotie de obsidibus
reddendis & de libertatibus suis & jure suo
secundum formam quam fecit bar. Angl.
nisi aliter esse debeat per chartas quas Rex
habet per iudicium archiepiscopi & aliorum
quos secum vocare voluerit.

Et omnes foreste que sunt aforestate per
regem tempore suo deafforestent, & ita fiat
de ripariis que per ipsum Regem sunt in de-
fenso.

Omnes autem istas consuetudines & liber-
tates quas Rex concessit regno tenendas
quantum ad se pertinet, erga suos omnes
de regno tam clerici quam laici observabunt
quantum ad se pertinent erga suos.

per

law of the marches. In like manner the Welshmen shall do to the King and his subjects.

THAT the King restore LEWELIN's son, and all the Welsh hostages, and the deeds that were delivered to him for the security of the peace.

THAT the King do right to the King of Scotland, concerning restoring of hostages, and his liberties and right, according to the form of the agreement with his barons of England, unless it ought to be otherwise by virtue of some deeds which the King has, by the judgment of the archbishop and others, whom he shall think fit to call to him.

THAT all forests that have been afforested by the King in his own time, be disafforested; and so of banks, which by the King himself have been put in defence.

ALL these customs and liberties which the King has granted to the kingdom, to hold and keep for his own part towards his men, all clerks and laymen of the kingdom shall observe and keep their parts towards their men.

THIS

Hec est forma securitatis ad observandam pacem & libertates inter Regem & regnum. Barones eligent **XXI.** barones de regno quos voluerint, qui debent pro totis viribus suis observare, tenere, & facere observari pacem, & libertates quas dominus Rex eis concessit, & charta sua confirmabit. Ita, viz. "Quod si Rex, vel iustitarius, vel ballivi Regis vel aliquis de ministris suis in aliquo erga aliquem deliquerit, vel aliquem articulorum pacis, aut securitatis transgressus fuerit, & delictum offensum fuerit **III.** baronibus de predictis **XXI.** Baronum: illi **III.** barones accedent ad dominum Regem vel ad iustitarium suum, si Rex fuerit extra regnum, proponentes ei excessum, & petent ut excessum illum sine dilatione faciat emendari. Et si Rex vel iustitarius illud non emendaverit, si Rex fuerit extra regnum, infra rationabile tempus determinandum in charta, predicti **III.** referent causam illam ad residuos de illis **XXI.** baronibus, & illi **XXI.** tum communia* totius terre distringent & gravabunt Regem modis om-

* Communia, C. M. Ep. Sar.

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This is the form of the security for keeping
 peace and the liberties betwixt the King and the
 kingdom. The barons shall chuse five and twenty
 barons of the realm, whom they will themselves,
 upon whom it shall be incumbent, that with all
 their might they observe and keep, and cause to be
 observed and kept, the peace and liberties which
 the King has granted to them, and confirmed by
 his charter; to wit, " That if the King, or his
 " justices, or bailiffs, or any of his ministers,
 " offend any person contrary to any of the said
 " articles, or transgress any article of this peace
 " and security, and that such offence be made
 " known to four of the said five and twenty
 " barons; those four barons shall go to the King,
 " or to his justiciary, if the King be out of the
 " realm, declaring to him that such an abuse is
 " committed, and shall desire him to cause it
 " speedily to be redressed. And if the King,
 " or (if he be out of the realm) his justiciary,
 " do not redress it, those four barons shall with-
 " in a reasonable time, to be limited in the char-
 " ter, refer the matter to the residue of the five
 " and twenty barons. And those five and twenty,
 " with the commonalty of all the land, shall dis-
 " tress the King all the ways they can, to wit,
 " by seizing his castles, his lands and possessi-
 " ons,

nis quibus poterint: scilicet per captionem castrorum, terrarum possessionem & aliis modis quibus poterint, donec fuerit emendatum secundum arbitrium eorum, salva persona domini Regis & Regine, & liberorum suorum. Et cum fuerit emendatum, intendant domino Regi sicut prius. Et quicumque voluerit de terre, iurabit ad predicta exequenda, pariturum mandatis predictorum XXX. baronum, & gravaturum Regem, pro posse suo cum ipsis. Et Rex publice & libere dabit licentiam iurandi cuilibet qui iurare voluerit, & nulli unquam iurare prohibebit. Omnes autem illos de terra qui sponte sua, & per se iurare voluerint XXX. baronibus de distringendo & gravando Regem cum iis cunctis Rex faciet iurare eisdem de mandato suo sicut predictum est.

Item* si aliquis de predictis XXX. baronum decesserit, vel a terra recesserit, vel aliquo alio modo impeditus fuerit quominus ista predicta possit exequi, qui residui fue-

* Sic & M. Ch. Ep. Sar.

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“ and by what other means they can, till it be
 “ redressed according to their good liking, saving
 “ the person of our lord the King, and of the
 “ Queen and of their children, And when it is
 “ redressed, they shall be subject to the King as
 “ before.” And whoever will may swear to
 put these things in execution, viz. To obey the
 commands of the said five and twenty barons,
 and to distress the King to the utmost of his
 power with them. And the King shall give
 public and free liberty for any man to swear that
 will, and shall never prohibit any to swear. And
 all those of the nation, who will voluntarily of
 their own accord swear to the five and twenty bar-
 ons to distress the King with them, the King
 himself shall issue his precept, commanding them
 to swear as aforesaid.

ITEM, if any of the said five and twenty ba-
 rons die, or go out of the realm, or be any
 other way hindered from performing these things,
 the residue of the five and twenty shall chuse ano-

runt de XXX. eligent alium loco ipsius pro arbitrio suo, qui simili modo erit iuratus quo & ceteri. In omnibus autem que illis XXX. baronibus committantur exequenda, si forte ipsi XXX. presentes fuerint & inter se super re aliqua discordaverint, vel aliqui ex eis vocati voluerint vel nequeant interesse, ratum habebitur & firmitum quod maior pars ex eis providerit vel preceperit, ac si omnes XXX. in hoc consensissent. Et predicti XXX. iurabunt quod omnia antedicta fideliter observabunt, & pro toto posse suo facient observari*. Preterea Rex faciet eos securos per chartas archiepiscopi & episcoporum & magni Pandulphi, quod nihil impetabit a domino papa per quod aliqua istarum conventionum revocetur, vel minatur. Et si aliquid tale impetraverit, reputetur irritum & inane, & nunquam eo utatur. Sine dato †.

* D. Matt. Par. † Hic & Ch. M. Ep. Sar. sine dato.

ther, whom they think best, in his place, who shall be sworn as the rest are. And in all matters referred to those five and twenty barons, if they happen to be all present, and differ amongst themselves; or if any of them being thereto appointed, will not or cannot come, what the major part of them shall agree upon and enjoin shall be valid, as if all the five and twenty had agreed in it. And the said five and twenty shall swear, that they will faithfully observe and keep the articles aforesaid, and with all their might cause them to be observed. Moreover the king shall give them the securities of the archbishop and bishops, and master PANDULPHUS, that he will not obtain any thing from the pope, whereby any of these articles of agreement may be revoked or diminished. And if any such thing be obtained, that it be reputed void and of none effect, nor shall ever be made use of.

*Diploma Regium: sive Ordinationes
Johannis Regis Angliæ, queis sta-
tuit quid Nobiles, quid Plebei ob-
servare debeant, ad pacem & tran-
quillitatem Regni stabiliendam*.*

I. **D**Y PAR la grace de Dieu Roi
Dengleterre, as archeveskes, as
eveskes, as abbez, as contes, as
barons, as Justices, as forestiers, as vis-
contes, as preboz, as ministres, & a toz
les bassitz, & les feels, saluz. Sachiez que
nos par la grace de Dieu & pur le saubement
de nostre asme, & de toz nos ancestres, & de
nos eirs, & de lenor de Dieu, & le saubement
de seinte iglise, & lamendement de nostre
regne, par le conseil de noz enorez peres
larceveske Estievene de Cantorbire primat
de tote Engleterre & cardinal de Rome, &
larceveske Henri de Dibeline, & leveske
William de Londres, leveske Pieres de
Wincestre, leveske Jocelin de Ba, leveske
Hu de Nichole †, leveske Gautier de Winc-

* Anno Chr. 1215.

† Lincolne.

cestre,

THE
GREAT CHARTER

OF
KING JOHN;

A true copy from the

ORIGINAL FRENCH.

JOH^N, by the grace of God King of Eng-
land, to the archbishops, bishops, abbots,
earls, barons, justices, foresters, sheriffs,
prevoists, ministers, and all his bailiffs and his
lieges, greeting. Know ye, that we by the grace
of God, and for the saving of our soul, and the
souls of all our ancestors, and of our heirs, and
for the honour of God, and the safety of holy
church, and for the amendment of our govern-
ment, by the advice of our honoured fathers,
STEPHEN, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of
all England, and cardinal of Rome; HENRY,
archbishop of Dublin, WILLIAM, bishop of Lon-
don, PETER, bishop of Winchester, JOCELIN,
bishop of Bath, HUGH, bishop of Lincoln, WAL-
TER, bishop of Worcester, WILLIAM, bishop of
Chester, BENEDICT, bishop of Rochester, and
master

cestre, leveske Will. de Cestre, & leveske
 Benett de Robecestre, & maistre Pandol
 sodiacre nostre seignor lapostoire, & nostre
 ami frere Anner maistre de la chevalerie del
 temple de Engleterre, & de nos barons
 Will. le marescal conte de Pembroke,
 Will. conte de Salisbires, Will. conte de
 Warenne, Will. conte de Arondel, Alain
 de Galtuche, conestable d'Escoce, Marin
 le fiz Gerod, Peres le fiz Herebert, Hubert
 de Bore seneschau de Peitou, Huges de
 Hueville, Matheu le fiz Herebert, Thomas
 Basset, Alain Basset, Philippe Daubeigni,
 Robert de Ropelee, Johan Marescal, &
 Johan le fiz Hue, & de nos autres feels,

Premierement que nos avons ottie * a
 Deu le confermions par ceste nostre presente
 chartre, por noz, & por nos eirs a toz lorz
 que les Eglises de Engleterre, seront fran-
 ches & aient lor dreitures franchises & ente-
 rines & plenieres, & volon que cili seit garde
 la que chose apert, par co que nos otriames
 par nostre pure volunte & de gre les fran-
 chises des elections que len tienent par plus

* Otrie,

grant

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maſter PANDULPH, ſub-deacon of our Lord the apoſtle, and of our friend brother ANNER, maſter of the order of knights templars in England; and by the advice of our barons, WILLIAM, earl marſhal earl of Pembroke, WILLIAM, earl of Salisbury, WILLIAM, earl of Warren, WILLIAM, earl of Arundel, ALAN of Galloway, conſtable of Scotland, WARIN FITZ-GERARD, PETER FITZ-HERBERT, THOMAS BASSET, ALAN BASSET, PHILIP D'AUBENIE, ROBERT DE ROPELEE, JOHN MARSHAL, and JOHN FITZ-HUGH, and by the advice of other lieges:

HAVE in the firſt place granted to God, and confirmed by this our preſent charter, for us and for our heirs for ever, That the churches of England ſhall be free, and ſhall enjoy their rights and franchises entirely and fully: and this our purpoſe is, that it be obſerved, as may appear by our having granted, of our mere and free will, that elections ſhould be free (which is reputed to be a very great and very neceſſary privilege of the churches of England) before the difference aroſe

B b

betwixt

grant & par plus necessaire as yglises de Engleterre, devant que la descorde fust commencie entre nos & nos barons, & la confirmames par nostre chartre et parchacames que ele fu confirmee par nostre seignor lapostoire Innocent le tiers, laquelle nos garderons et volons que nostre eir la gardent toz iorz en bone sei.

III. Nos avon encore otrie a toz lez francs homes de nostre rene pur nos, et pur nos eirs a toz iorz totes les franchises qui de soz sunt escrites, quil les aient et les tiegent il et lor eir de nos et de nos eirs, se acuns de nos contes, vo de nos barons, vo des autres qui tiennent de nos en chief par servise de chavalier mora, et quant il sera mors et ses eirs sera de plein aage et debra relief, ait son heritage par l'ancien relief, co est a savoir li rie, ou li eir del conte, de baronie contal entiere par C. livres li eirs ou li eir del baron de la barone par C. livres: li eirs ou li eir de chevalier de fie de chevalier entier par C. sol au plus, et qui meins debra meins doinst selon l'anciene costume del fie.

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betwixt us and our barons, and by our having confirmed the same by our charter, and by our having procured it moreover to be confirmed by our lord the apostle INNOCENT the third. Which privilege we will maintain; and our will is, that the same be faithfully maintained by our heirs for ever.

WE have also granted to all the freemen of our kingdom, for us and for our heirs for ever, all the liberties hereafter mentioned, to have and to hold to them and their heirs of us and our heirs. If any of our earls, our barons, or others that hold of us in chief by knight-service, die; and at the time of his death his heir be of full age, and relief be due, he shall have his inheritance by the antient relief; to wit, the heir or heirs of an earl, for an entire earldom, C. pounds; the heir or heirs of a baron, for an entire barony, C. marks; the heir or heirs of a knight, for a whole knight's fee, C. shillings at most; and where less is due, less shall be paid, according to the antient customs of the several tenures.

IV. Si le eirs d'aucun di tels sera dedens aage, et sera en garde; quand il sera parvenu a aage ait son heritage sans relief et sans fin.

V. Les gardeors de la terre de tel eir qui sera dedens aage ne pregne de la terre de leir fors reignables, eissues et reignables costumes, et reignables services, et ce senz destruiement, et senz wast des homes et des choses.

VI. Et se nos abons libree la garde de la terre d'aucun itel a visconte o a acune altre qui nos dei respondre des eissues de la terre, et cil de la garde sera destruiement o wast, nos prendrons de celui amende, et la terre sera libree a deus leals prodes homes de cel sei qui respoignent des eissues a nos, o celui que nos comandrons.

VII. Et se nos abons done o vendu a aucun la garde de la terre de aucun itel, et cil entra destruiement o wast par de cele garde, et seit libre a deus leials sage prodes homes et dicele que i nous respoignent, si come nos abons devant dit.

VIII. Et

If the heirs of any such be within and in ward, they shall have their inheritance when they come of age without relief, and without fine.

THE guardians of the land of such heirs being within age, shall take nothing out of the land of the heirs, but only the reasonable profits, reasonable customs, and reasonable services, and that without making destruction or waste of men or goods.

AND if we shall have committed the custody of the land of any such heir to a sheriff, or any other who is to account to us for the profits of the land, and that such committee make destruction or waste, we will take of him amends, and the land shall be committed to two lawful and good men of that fee, who shall account for the profits to us, or to such as we shall appoint.

AND if we shall give or sell to any person, the custody of the lands of any such heir, and such donee or vendee make destruction or waste, he shall lose the custody, and it shall be committed to two lawful, sage, and good men, who shall account to us for the same, as aforesaid.

AND

VIII. Et si le gardior tant dis com il aura la garde de telle terre, sossinges lee meissons, les biviens, les pars, les essants, les molins, et les altres choses qui apartient a cele terre de eissues, et de celle meismes terre: et rendra al eir quant sera parbenus en plain aage la terre tote estore de charues, de granges, solon quodque li tens de la gaignerie requera, et les eissues de la terre porront musurablement soffrir reissnablment.

IX. Li eir scient marie sans desparagement eissi ne purquant que ainz que li mariages seit fet, seit mostre ai prochains del lignage de cel eir.

X. La bebe empres la mort de son mari namtenant et sans grebance ait son mariage et son heritage, ne riens ne doinst pour son mariage, ne pour son doaire, ne pour son heritage que elle et ses maris tindrent, al ior de la mort del mari, & seit en la maison de son mari puis qu'il sera mort xl. jorz dedens les quels jorz li seit les doairez librez.

XI. Nule bebe ne seit destreite de se marier tant dis come ele voldra vivre sanz
mari

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AND the guardian, whilst he has custody of the heir's land, shall maintain the houses, ponds, parks, pools, mills, and other appurtenances to the land, out of the profits of the land itself; and shall restore to the heir, when he shall be of full age, his land well stocked, with ploughs, barns, and the like, as it was when he received it, and as the profits will reasonably afford,

HEIRS shall be married without disparagement; insomuch, that before the marriage be contracted, the persons that are next of kin to the heir, be made acquainted with it.

A widow after the death of her husband, shall presently and without oppression, have her marriage and her inheritance; nor shall give any thing for her marriage, nor for her dower, nor for her inheritance, which she and her husband were seized of the day of her husband's death: and she shall remain in her husband's house forty days after his death; within which time her dower shall be assigned her.

No widow shall be compelled to marry if she be desirous to live single, provided she give security

marri eill ne purquant que ele face seurte que ele ne se marira sanz nostre otrei, se ele tient de nos o sanz lotrei de son seignor de qui elle tient, se ele tient d'autrui.

XII. Ne nos ne nostre bailli ne seiseron terre ne rente del dettor pour aucune dette tandis com sis chattels sofficient a passer la dette, ne si plege ne seront desrois tant dis come le chevetaigne dettor soffira a la dette passer. Et se le chevetaigne dettor na de quei passer la dette, respoigne li plege de la dette. Et sil volent aient les terres, & les rentes del dettor jusqu'il aient refforement de la dette qu'il ont devant passee pour lui; se le chevetaigne dettor ne monstre qu'il en est quitte vers cels pleges.

XIII. Se aucuns a emprunte as Jues * plus o meins, & muert devant qu'il lor ait paie lor avoir, ne croisse mie la dette tant dis com li eirs sera dednes aage, & se cele dette vient en nos mains nos nen prendron que le chaille † que nos troveron en la charte.

* *Id est Juis.*

* *Id est, le capital, le principal.*

curity not to marry without our leave, if she hold of us, or without the lord's leave of whom she holds, if she hold of any other.

WE nor our bailiffs will not feize the lands or rents of a debtor for any debt so long as his goods are sufficient to pay the debt: nor shall the pledges be distrained upon whilst the principal debtor is able to pay the debt. But if the principal debtor have not wherewith to pay the debt, the pledges shall answer for it: and if they will, they shall have the lands and rents of the debtor till they have received the debt which they paid for him, if the principal debtor cannot shew that he is quit against his pledges.

IF any persons have borrowed money of Jews, more or less, and die before they have paid the debt, the debt shall not grow whilst the heir is under age; and if such debt become due to us, we will take no more than the goods expressed in deed.

XIV. Et se aucun muret, & deit dette au Jues, sa femme ait son doaire, & ne paieit nient de cele dette, & se li enfant qui remaindront del mort sont dedenz aage, porbeu lor seit lor estobeir raisnablement solonc le tenement qui fu del mort, & del remanant seit paiee la dette, sauf le service des seignors, & en tel maniere seit fait de dettes que l'on deit a altres que a Jues.

XV. Len ne mettra nul escuage *, ne aie † en nostre regne, fors par commun conseil de nostre regne, fors a nostre reindre ‡ & a nostre ainzue fiz faire chevalier, & a nostre ainznee fille marier une feiz; & a cestes choses ne face len aie se raisonnable non.

XVI. En cele maniere seit fait daies de la cite de Londres, & estre co la cite de Londres ait totes les anciennes costumes, & les franchises, & par mer & par aigue.

* F. taille, † aide.

‡ Id est, ad nostrum corpus redimendum si in bello capti fuerimus, ut infra.

AND if any die, and owe a debt to the Jews, his wife shall have her dower, and shall be charged with no part of the debt; and if the children of the deceased person be within age, their reasonable estovers shall be provided them, according to the value of the estate which their ancestor had; and the debt shall be paid out of the residue, saving the services due to the lord. In like manner shall it be done in cases of debts owing to other persons that are not Jews.

WE will impose no escuage* nor aids within our realm, but by the common council of our realm, except for our ransom, and for the making our eldest son a knight, and for marrying our eldest daughter once: and for these purposes there shall but a reasonable aid be required.

IN like manner shall it be done within the city of London: and moreover, the city of London shall have all her antient customs and liberties by land and water.

* Taxes for the helmet, or war.

XVII. Nos volons estre co, & otrions que totes les altres citez & li borc, & les biles, & li port aient en totes lor franchises, & lor franchises costumes.

XVIII. Et aient le commun conseil del regne, de laie a asseoir autrement que as treis cas qui sont devant dit, e lescuage a seer ferons somondre les archeveskes, les eveskes, les abbez, les comtes, les greignors barons : chacun par sei par nos lettres, & estre co ferons somondre en commun par nos viscontes, & par nos bailliz toz ceu quis de nos tinent en chief a certain jor, co est al teyme de xl. jorz al mains & a certain lieu, & nomerons la cause en totes lettres de ceste somonse. Et quant la somonse sera issi faite voist li afaires avant, au jor assigne selon le conseil di cels qui seront present ja seit co que ne soient pas venu tuit cil qui furent somons.

XIX. Nos notrions a nul des ore en evant quil pregne aie de ses frans homes fors a son cors raimbre * & a son ainzne fiz

* *Vid. supra.*

WE will moreover and grant, that all other cities, and boroughs, and towns, and ports, have, in all respects, their liberties and free customs.

AND as for coming to the common council of the kingdom, and for assessing aids (except in the three cases aforesaid) and as for the assessing of escuage, we will cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and the greater barons, each in particular by our letters; and moreover, we will cause to be summoned in general, by our sheriffs, and bailiffs, all that hold of us in chief, at a certain day; to wit, forty days after at least, and at a certain place; and in our said letters we will express the cause of the summons. And when the summons shall be so made, business shall go on at the day assigned, by the advice of such as are present, though all that are summoned do not appear.

WE will not allow for the future, that any take aid of his free-men, but only to ransom his person, to make his eldest son a knight, and to marry his eldest

faire chevalier, & a sa fille ainznee marier
une seiz & a co ne seit seit aie se raisnable
non.

XX. Nuls ne seit destrein3 a faire grenor
servise de sieu de chevalier o daltre franc
tenement, que tant come il tient & deit.

XXI. Li commun plaist ne fissent mis nos-
tre cort, mais saient tenu en alcun certain
lieu.

XXII. Les reconuissances de nobele des-
faisine de mort d'ancestre, & de darrain pre-
sentment ne seient prises fors en lor con-
tez & ceste maniere: nos o nostre chevetains
justicieres se nos sumes fors del regne envie-
rons deus justices par chascun conte par III.
seiz en lan qui o quatre des chevilers de chas-
cun conte esleuz par le conte pregnant el
conte, & el jor del conte, & en certain lieu
les devant dites assises, & se les devant dites
assises ne puent estre prises el jor del conte,
tant chevaliers & franchement tenanz re-
maignent de cels qui furent present al conte
en icel jor par qui puissent jugement estre
fait

eldest daughter once; and for these purposes there shall but a reasonable aid be given.

NONE shall be distrained to do greater service for a knight's fee, or for any other frank-tenement than what is due by his tenure.

COMMON pleas shall not follow our court, but shall be held in a certain place.

RECOGNIZANCES of *novel disseisin*, *mordancester*, and *darrein presentment*, shall be taken no where but in their proper counties, and in this manner: We, or our chief justice (if ourselves be out of the realm) will send two justices through every county four times a year; who, with four knights of every county, to be chosen by the county, shall take the said assizes in the county, at a day when the county-court is held, and in a certain place: and if the said assizes cannot be taken upon that day, so many knights and free tenants of them that were present in the county-court that day, shall stay, as may give a good judgment,

fait solusament, solon co qui li afaire sera plus grant o plus petit.

XXIII. Frans hom ne set amerciez pour petit forfait fors solon la maniere del forfait & pour le grant forfait seit amerciez solon la grandescie del forfait sauf son contement, & li marcheant enseint saube la marchandise. Li vilaint enseint seit amerciez saals son gaagnage sil chiet en nostre merci, & nule des debant dites mercis ne sera mise fors par le serement de probomes & des leaus des vssnez.

XXIV. Li conte et li baron ne seient amerciez fors par lor pers et solonc la maniere del forfeit,

XXV. Nus clers ne soit amerciez de son lai tenement, fors solonc la maniere des autres qui debant sunt dit, et nun pas solonc la quantite de la rente de siglise*.

XXVI. Ne ville ne home ne seit destreiz a faire ponz a rivieres, fors cil qui anciennement et par drest les debent faire.

* F. des Iglise, ou de Liglise.

judgment, according as the concern may be greater or less.

A FREEMAN shall not be amerced for a little offence, but according to the manner of his offence; and for a great offence he shall be amerced according to the greatness of his offence, saving his contenement; and so a merchant saving his merchandize; and a villain in like manner shall be amerced saving his wainage, if he fall into our mercy: and none of the said amercements shall be affected, but by oath of good and lawful men of the vicinage.

An earl and a baron shall not be amerced but by their peers, and according to the manner of their offence.

No clerk shall be amerced but according to his lay-fee, and in like manner as others aforesaid, and not according to the quantity of his church-living.

No ville nor any man shall be distrained to make bridges over rivers, but where they antiently have, and of right, ought to make them.

XXVII. Nuls visquents ne conestables ne nostre coroneor ne nostre altre bailli ne tiegent les plaiz de nostre corone.

XXVIII. Chascune comtez, hundres, wapulzac, et treingues, soient as anciennes fermes sens nul croissement, fors nos demeins maniers.

XXIX. Se aucuns qui tient lai fie de nos muert et nostre visquents, a autres nostre bailliz, monstre nos lettres overtes de nostre semonke de la dette que li mort nos debeit, leissie a nostre visconte o a nostre bailli atachier et enbrevez les chatels del mort, qui seront trove el lai fie a la bailliance dicelle dette, que li mort nos debeit par veue de leaus homes, eissi ne par quant que riens ne seist oste jusque nos seist paiee la dette qui sera coneue : et li remanant seist saissie as exectours a faire le testament del mort : et sil ne nos deident rien tot li chatel seient otrie al mort, saubes les reignables parties de la feme et de ses enfans.

XXX. Se aucuns frans huem muert senz testament, li chatel seient departi par les mains

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No sheriffs, constables, coroners, nor other our bailiffs, shall hold the pleas of our crown.

ALL counties, hundreds, wapentakes and tithings, shall be at the antient farms without being raised, except our own demesne manors.

If any that holds of us a lay-fee die, and our sheriffs, or other our bailiffs shew our letters patents of summons for a debt which the deceased owed to us, our sheriff or bailiff may well attach and inventory the goods of the dead, which shall be found upon his lay-fee, to the value of the debt which the deceased owed to us, by the view of lawful men, yet so as nothing be removed till such time as the debt, which shall be found to be due to us, be paid; and the residue shall go to the executors to perform the testament of the dead: and if nothing be owing to us, all his goods shall go to the use of the dead, saving to his wife and children their reasonable parts.

If any freeman die intestate, his goods shall be divided by the hands of his near kindred and

mainz des prochains parens et de ses amis par la veue de seinte iglise, s'aves les dettes a chascun que le mort loz devoit.

XXXI. Nus de nos conestables ne de nos altres bailliz ne pregne les bles, ne les altres chatels daucun, se maintenant nen paie les deniers, sil nen puet abez respit par volente del vendeor.

XXXII. Nus conestables ne destreigne nul chevalier a doner deniers pour la garde del chastel, sil laboit faite en sa propre persone u par autre prodome sil ne la puet faire par aucune reignable achaisun*, & se nos le menons o enveions en off, il sera quittes dicele garde tant dis cum il sera par nos enloft.

XXXIII. Nus viscontes ne nostre bailliz ne altre ne pregne les chevals ne les charettes daucun franc home, pour faire cariage, fors par la volente de cel franc home.

* *Id est, raisonable occasion.*

XXXIV. Ne

friends by the view of holy church, saving to every one their debts which the dead owed them.

NONE of our constables, nor other our bailiffs shall take the corn, nor other the goods of any person without paying for the same presently, unless he have time given him by consent of the vendor.

OUR constables shall distrain no man who holds by knight-service, to give money for castle-guard, if he has performed it himself in proper person, or by another good man, if he could not perform it himself for some reasonable cause: and if we lead him, or send him into the army, he shall be discharged of castle-guard for so long time as he shall be with us in the army.

OUR sheriffs, our bailiffs, or others, shall not take the horses nor carts of any freeman to make carriage, but by leave of such freeman.

NEITHER

XXXIV. Ne nos ne nostre baillie ne prendrons altrui bois a nos chassels, o a nos altres obres faire, fors par la volente de celui cui sera li bois.

XXXV. Nos ne tendrons les terres de cels qui seront condempne de felonie, fors un an & un joz, & adons les rendrons as seignors des fiez.

XXXVI. Tot li kidel seien dici en avant oste del tot en tot de Tamise & de Medoigne, & par tote Engleterre, fors par la costiere de la mer.

XXXVII. Li bres qui est apelez precipz des ci en avant ne seit faiz a nul dauncun tenement, dont frans hoem peust peyre sa cort.

XXXVIII. Une mesure de vin seit par tot nostre regne, & une mesure de cerbeise, & une mesure de ble, co est li quartiers de Londres, & une leise de dras teinz, & de rasez, & de habergie, co est deus aunes
dedenz

NEITHER ourselves nor our bailiffs shall take another man's wood for our castles, or other occasions, but by his leave whose wood it is.

WE will hold the lands of such as shall be convicted of felony but a year and a day, and then we will restore them to the lords of the fees.

ALL wears shall, from this time forward, be wholly taken away in Thames and Medway, and throughout all England, except upon the sea-coast.

THE writ called Precipe henceforth shall be made to none out of any tenement, whereby a freeman may lose his court.

ONE measure of wine shall be used throughout our kingdom, and one measure of ale, and one measure of corn, to wit, the London quart. And there shall be one breadth of dyed cloths, ruffets, and haubergets, to wit, two ells within the lists:
and

dedenz listes, & des peis* seit ensement
come des mesures†.

XXXIX. Reins ne seit done ne pris des
ci en avant pour le bief del enqueste de vie,
o de membres de aucun, mais seit otree en
pur don, & ne seit esconduit.

XL. Se aucuns tient de nos par feufirme
o par sokage, & tient terre daltrui par ser-
vise de chevalier, nos n'aurons mie la garde
del eir, ne de la terre qui est daltrui fie par
achasson de cele feufirme, o del sokage, o
del bozgage. Ne n'aurons la garde de cele
feufirme, o del sokage, o del bozgage, se
cele feufirme ne deit service de chevalier.

XLI. Nos n'aurons la garde del eir ne
de la terre dalcun, que il tient daltrui par
servise de chevalier, par achasson daucune
petite serjanterie, quil tient de nos par ser-
vise de rendre laettes, o cotelz, o tels
choies.

* Pois.

† Mesures.

XLII. Puis

MAGNA CHARTA. 209

and concerning weights, it shall be in like manner as of measures,

NOTHING shall be given or taken henceforth for a writ of inquisition of life or member, but it shall be granted freely and shall not be denied,

If any hold of us by fee-farm, or by soccage, and hold likewise land of others by knight-service, we will not have the custody of the heir, nor of the land which is of the fee of another, by reason of such fee-farm, soccage, or burgage, unless such fee-farm owe knight-service,

WE will not have the wardship of the heir, nor of the land of any person, which he holds of another by knight-service, by reason of any petit serjeantry by which he holds of us, as by the service of giving us arrows, knives, or such like.

Es

No

XLII. Nuls bailliz ne mette des rien a-
vant aucun a lei par la simple parole, fors
par bons tesmoins amenez aice.

XLIII. Nuls frans hom ne sera pris, ne
emprisonnez, ne distailliz, ne ullagiez, ne eis-
silliez, ne destruisz, ne aucune maniere, ne
soz lui n'irons ne n'embeierons, fors par leal
jugement de ses pers, o par la lei de la
terre.

XLIV. A nulli ne vendrons, a nulli ne
scondrons ne ne proloignerons dzeir ne jus-
tise.

XLV. Tuit li marchant aient sauf & seur
eissir d'Engleterre, & venir en Engleterre &
demoze, & alez par Engleterre, par terre
& par eaue a vende & a chatez, sans totes
males totes par les ancienes drettes col-
tumes, fors el tens de guerre, cil ki sunt
de la terre qui nos guerroye, & se tel sunt
trove en nostre terre el commencement de la
guerre, soient atachie sans domage de loz
coz & de loz choses, jusqu'il seït seu de nos
o de nostre chebetein justifier coment li mar-
cheant de la nostre terre seront traitie, qui
donc

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No bailiff for the time to come shall put any man to his law upon his bare word, without good witnesses produced.

No freeman shall be taken, nor imprisoned, nor disseized, nor out-lawed, nor exiled, nor destroyed in any manner; nor will we pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.

We will sell to none, we will deny nor delay to none right and justice.

ALL merchants may, with safety and security, go out of England, and come into England, and stay, and pass through England by land and water, to buy and sell without any evil tolls, paying the antient and rightful duties, except in time of war; and then they that are of the country with whom we are at war, and are found here at the beginning of the war, shall be attached, but without injury to their bodies or goods, till it be known to us or to our chief-justice, how our merchants are entreated which are found in

donc seront trobe en la terre qui contre nos guerroie, & se li nostre sunt flucke sauf, seient si loz sauf en la nostre terre.

XLVI. Leise chacun des ci en avant eissir de nostre regne & repairer sauf & seur par terre & par eue saube nostre fei, fors el tens de guerre par aucun petit tens pour preu del regne: Mais di co sunt jet te fors li emprisonne, & li utlagie selon la lei del regne, & la gent ki contre nos guerroie. Des marcheans seit seit, si come nous avons devant dit.

XLVII. Se aucuns tient daucune eschaette si come del honoz de Malingeford, Nottingehan, Boloigne, Lancastre, u dautres echaetes qui sunt en nostre main, & sunt de baronie, & il muert, ses heirs ne doint altre relief, ne face a nos altre servise, qui feist al baron, ce cele baronie fust en main del baron, & nos la tendrone en tele maniere que le baron la tint.

XLVIII. Li home qui maignent fors de la foress, ne diegnent de ci en avant devant
nos

our enemies' country; and if our's be safe there, they shall be safe in our land.

It shall be lawful for all men in time to come, to go out of our kingdom, and to return safely and securely by land and by water, saving their faith due to us, except it be in time of war for some short time for the profit of the realm. But out of this article are excepted persons in prison, persons out-lawed, according to the law of the land, and persons of the country with whom we are at war. Concerning merchants what is above-said shall hold as to them.

If any hold of any escheat, as of the honour of Wallingford, Nottingham, Boloin, Lancaster, or of other escheats which are in our hand, and are baronies, and die, his heirs shall owe to us no other relief, nor do us any other service, than was due to the baron of such barony when it was in his hand; and we will hold the same in like manner as the baron held it.

MEN that dwell out of the forest, shall not appear before our justices of the forest by common

nos justises de la forest par communes communes, sil ne sont en plait u plege de aucun ou d'aucuns qui seient atachie pour la forest.

XLIX. Nos ne ferons viscontes, justises, ne bailliz, fors de tels qui sachent la lei de la terre, & la voillent bien garder.

L. Tuit cil qui fonderent abbeies, dont il ont charges des Reis d'Engleterre, o ancienne tenue, aiant en la garde quant eles seront voides, si com il avoit debent.

LI. Cotes les forez qui sunt aforessees en nostre tens seient maintenant desaforessees, & ensemblement seit fait des ribieres qui en nostre tens sunt par nos mises en defens.

LII. Cotes les males costumes des forez & des warrenes, & des forestiers, & des warreniers, des viscontes & de loz ministres, des ribieres & de loz gardes, seient maintenant enquis es en chascun conte par xii. chevaliers jurez de meimes le conte, qui debent estre esleu par prodes homes de meismes le conte & de denz xl. joz apres ce quil auront sette lenqueste, seient del tot en tot offices

mon summons, unless they be in suit themselves, or bail for others who are attached for the forest.

WE will not make sheriffs, justices, nor bailiffs, but of such as know the law of the land, and will keep it.

ALL that have founded abbies, whereof they have charters from the Kings of England, or antient tenure, shall have the custody thereof whilst they are vacant, as they ought to have.

ALL the forests that have been afforested in our time, shall instantly be disafforested; in like manner be it of rivers, that in our time and by us have been put in defence.

ALL evil customs of forests and warrens, and of foresters and warreners, of sheriffs and their ministers, of rivers and of guarding them, shall forthwith be inquired of in every county by twelve knights sworn of the same county, who must be chosen by the good men of the same county. And within forty days after they have made such inquisition, the said evil customs shall be utterly abolished by those same knights, so as
never

offees par cels meismes, si que jamais ne
saiient rapelees, cissi ne por quant que nos
le sachons avanto nostre justise, se nos ne
sumes en Engleterre.

LIII. Nos tendrons maintenant toz les
hostages & totes les chartres, qui nos furent
librees des Engleis en seurte de pais, o de
freel serbise.

LIV. Nous offeron de tot en tot des baillies les parens Girard d'Aties, si que des ci en avant n'auront nulle baillie en Engleterre, & Engelart de Cigoigni, Peron, Guion, Andreu, de Chanceas, Gion de Cigoigni, Gistrai de Martigni & ses freres, Phelippe, Marc & ses freres, Gestrat son nevo, & tote lor liute, & maintenant empres le reformement de la pais offerons de nostre regne tos les estranges chevaliers, aubellastiers, serjans, soldiers quo chevals & o armes vindrent al nuilement del regne.

LV. Se alcuns est deffaisiz o esloinie par nos, sens real* jugement de ses pers, de

* Leal, ut infra.

terres,

MAGNA CHARTA. 217

never to be revived; provided they be first made known to us, or to our chief justice if we be out of the realm.

WE will, forthwith, restore all the hostages, and all the deeds which have been delivered to us by the English, for surety of the peace, or of faithful service.

WE will wholly put out of bailiffwicks, the kindred of Gerard de Aties, so that from henceforth they shall not have a bailiffwick in England; and Engeland de Cigoigni, Peron, Guyon, Andrew de Chanceas, Gyon de Cygoigni, Geffry de Martigni and his brothers, Philip, Mark and his brothers, Geffry his nephew, and all their train. And presently after the peace shall be performed, we will put out of the realm all knights, foreigners, slingers, serjeants and soldiers, who came with horse or arms to the nuisance of the realm.

If any be disseized or esloined by us, without lawful judgment of his peers, of lands, chattels,

F f

franchises,

terres, de chassels, de franchises, o de la
 dreiture maintenant li rendrons, & le plaiz
 en commencera di co, adonc en seit fait par
 jugement des xxv. barons, dont len parole
 de soz en la seurt de la pais.

LVI. De totes iteles choses dont aucuns
 fu dessaisiz o esloigniez senz leal jugement
 de ses pers par le Rei Henri nostre pere, o
 par le Rei Richart nostre frere, que avons
 en nostre main, o altre tienent cui il nos co-
 vient garantir, aurons respit jusqu'a com-
 mun terme des croizier, fors que celes
 choses dont plaiz fu comenciez o enqueste
 faite par nostre comandement devant que nos
 prissions la croiz. Et se nos repairons del
 pelerinage o par avanture remanons del pe-
 lerinage maintenant en frons pleine dreiture.
 Cest meimes respit aurons et en ceste ma-
 niere de dreiture faire des forez desaforester,
 o que remaignent forez que li Reis Henri
 nostre pere, o li Reis Richart nostre frere
 afozesterent, & des gardes des terres qui
 sunt daltrui fie; que nos avons eues jusques
 icy par achaison de fie que aucuns teneit de
 nos par servise de chevalier, & des abbeies
 qui furent fondees en altrui fie que el nostre,
 esquels

franchises, or of any right, we will, forthwith, restore the same; and if any difference arise upon it, it shall be determined by the judgment of the five and twenty barons, of whom mention is made hereafter in the security for the peace.

As to all things whereof any have been disseized, or esloined without lawful judgment of their peers, by King HENRY our father, or by King RICHARD our brother, which we have in our hands, or which any other has, to whom we are bound to warrant the same, we will have respite to the common term of them that are crossed for the holy land, except such things for which suits are commenced, or inquest taken by our order before we took upon us the cross. And if we return from the pilgrimage, or perhaps forbear going, we will do full right therein. The same respite we will have, and the same right we will do in manner aforesaid, as to the disafforesting of forests, or letting them remain forests, which the Kings, HENRY our father, or RICHARD our brother have afforested; and as to the custodies of lands which are of the fee of other persons, which we have held till now by reason of other men's fees, who held of us by knight-service; and of abbies that are founded in other men's

esquels li fies del fie dît quila droiture, & quant nos seron repairie de nostre pelerimage, o se no remanons, nos enfrons maintenant pleine droiture a cels qui sen plaindront.

LVII. Nuls ne soit pris ne emprisonnez pour apel de feme de la mort d'altrui, que de sun marri.

LVIII. Totes les fins & toz les amerciemens qui sont fait vers nos a toz & contre la lei de la terre, soient tot pardone, o len en face par jugement del xrb. barons dont len parole de soz, o par le jugement de la greignoz partie de cels ensemble, o le devant dit archevesque Stefne de Cantorbe sil i puet estre: & cels quil vodra apeler od sei, & sil ni poza estre neien meins ne voist li afares avant senz lui en tel maniere que se alcuns o alcun des devant diz xrb. barons, seront en tel querele seient oste de cest jugement, & altre esieu & jure seient mis a co faire en lieu de cels par le remanant des devant diz xrb. barons.

LIX. Se

fees, in which the lords of the fees claim a right, and when we shall be returned from our pilgrimage, or if we forbear going, we will immediately do full right to all that shall complain,

NONE shall be taken nor imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman, for the death of any other than her husband.

ALL the fines and all the amercements that are imposed for our use, wrongfully and contrary to the law of the land, shall be pardoned; or else they shall be determined by the judgment of the five and twenty barons, of whom hereafter, or by the judgment of the greater number of them that shall be present, or before STEPHEN, archbishop of Canterbury, if he can be there, and those that he shall call to him; and if he cannot be present, matters shall proceed, notwithstanding, without him; so always, that if one or more of the said five and twenty barons be concerned in any such complaint, they shall not give judgment thereupon, but others chosen and sworn shall be put in their room to act in their stead, by the residue of the said five and twenty barons.

IF

LIX. Se nos abons dessaisiz & esloigniez les Malais de terre & de franchises, o d'autres choses senz leal jugement de loz pers en Engleterre, o en Wales, maintenant loz seient rendues, & se plaz en sera comancier seloiz en seit fait en la Marche par jugement de loz peres des tenemenz d'Engleterre solonc la lei d'Engleterre, des tenemenz de Wales solonc la lei de Wales, des tenemenz de la Marche solonc de lei de la Marche, & ce meismes facent li Malais a nos & as noz.

LX. De totes celes choses dont aucuns des Malais fu dessaisiz, o esloignie senz leal jugement de ses pers par le Rei Henri nostre pere, o par le Rei Richart nostre frere, que nos abons en nostre main, o autre tiennent cui il nos cobient garantir, aurons respit jusqual commun terme des croisiez, fors de celes choses dont plaist fu commenciez o enqueste faite par nostre commandement devant que nous prissions la croiz, & quant nos serons repairiez o se par aventure remanons de nostre pelerinage maintenant loz enfrons pleine dreiture solonc les lez de Wales, & les devant dites parties.

LXI. Nos

IF we have disseized or esloined any Welchmen of land, franchises, or of other things, without lawful judgment of their peers, in England or in Wales, they shall, forthwith, be restored unto them; and if suits arise thereupon, right shall be done them in the Marches by the judgment of their peers; of English tenements according to the law of England, and of tenements in Wales according to the law of Wales; and tenements in the Marches according to the law of the Marches: and in like manner shall the Welch do to us and our subjects.

As for all such things, whereof any Welchmen have been disseized or esloined, without lawful judgment of their peers, by King HENRY our father, or by King RICHARD our brother, which we have in our hands, or which any others have, to whom we are bound to warrant the same, we will have respite till the common term be expired of all that crossed themselves for the Holy Land, those things excepted whereupon suits were commenced, or inquests taken by our order before we took upon us the cross; and when we shall return from our pilgrimage, or if, peradventure, we forbear going, we will presently cause full right to be done therein, according to the laws of Wales, and before the said parties.

WE

LXI. Nos rendrons le fil Letwelín maintenant & toz les hostages de Wales, & les chartres que l'en nos libza en seurte de pais.

LXII. Nos ferons a Alisandze le Rei d'Escoce de ses setors & de ses hostages rendre, & de ses franchises, & de la dretture solonc la forme que nos frons a nos altres barons d'Engleterre, se autrement ne deit estre par les chartres que nos avons de son pere Willaume, qui fu jadis Reis d'Escoce, & co sera fait par jugement de ses pers en nostre cozt.

LXIII. Totes ces costumes devant dites & les franchises que nos avons otríees a tenir en nostre regne quant a nos appartient envers les nos, tust cil de nostre regne, & clerc & lai devent garder quant a eus appartient envers les loz.

LIV. Et car nos avons otríees totes les choses devant dites por Deu, & por amandement de nostre regne, & por mielz plaiser la descorde qui es comancíee entre nos & nos barons: nos voelliant que ces choses seent fermes & estables a tos jors, faisons
 & otrions

WE will forthwith restore the son of LEWELYN, and all the hostages of Wales, and the deeds that have been delivered to us for security of the peace.

WE will deal with ALEXANDER, King of Scotland, as to the restoring him his suitors and his hostages, his franchises and rights, as we do with our other barons of England, unless it ought to be otherwise by virtue of the charters which we have of his father WILLIAM, late King of Scotland; and this to be by the judgment of his peers in our court.

ALL these customs and franchises aforesaid, which we have granted to be kept in our kingdom, so far forth as we are concerned, towards our men, all persons of the kingdom, clerks and lay, must observe for their parts towards their men.

AND, whereas, we have granted all these things for God's sake, and for the amendment of our government, and for the better compromising the discord arisen betwixt us and our barons: we, willing that the same be firmly held and established for ever, do make and grant to our barons the

G g

security

& otrions a nos barons la seurte de loz es-
 crite; co est que li baron essissent xxv. barons
 del regne telz quil vodront, qui dient de
 tot loz poer garder & tenir, & faire garder la
 pais & les franchises que nos avons otriees
 & confermees par ceste nostre presente char-
 tre eissi co est a saver que se nos, o nostre
 justise, o nostre bailli, o acuns de nos mi-
 nistres mesfaisons en aucune choses vers al-
 cun, o trespacions en aucun point de la pais,
 o de la seurte, & nostre mesfais sera mos-
 trez a quatre barons del devant dit xxv. cil
 quatre baron viegnent a nos, o a nostre
 justise, se nos sumes fors del regne, & nos
 monstrent nostre trespassement, & requierent
 que nos faciens amender cel trespassement
 senz proloignement & se nos namendions
 le trespassement, o se nous sumes fors del
 regne nostre justise ne lamendra devant xl.
 jors empres co que il sera mostre a nos, o a
 nostre justise se nous sumes fors de la terre,
 adonc li devant dit quatre reportent cele
 cause al altres de celz xxv. barons, & donc
 cil xxv. barons a la commune de tote En-
 gleterre nos destreindront & greveront en
 totes li manieres que il porront. Co est par
 prendre chastelz & terres & possessions, & en
 queles

security underwritten; to wit, That the barons shall chuse five and twenty barons of the Realm, whom they list, who shall, to their utmost power, keep and hold, and cause to be kept, the peace and liberties which we have granted and confirmed by this our present charter; insomuch, that if we, or our justice, or our bailiff, or any of our ministers, act contrary to the same in any thing, against any persons, or offend against any article of this peace and security, and such our miscarriage be shewn to four barons of the said five and twenty, those four barons shall come to us, or to our justice, if we be out of the realm, and shew us our miscarriage, and require us to amend the same without delay; and if we do not amend it, or if we be out of the realm, our justice do not amend it within forty days after the same is shewn to us, or to our justice if we be out of the realm, *then the said four barons shall report the same to the residue of the said five and twenty barons; and then those five and twenty barons, with the commonalty of England, may distress us by all the ways they can; to wit, by seizing on our castles, lands, and possessions, and by what other means they can, till it be amended, as they shall adjudge; saving our own person, the person of our Queen, and the persons of our children: and when it is amended, they shall*
be

queles autres manieres qu'il poront, jusqu'il
 soit amende solonc loz jugement, sauve nos-
 tre personne & de nostre Reine, & de nos
 enfans, & quant il sera amande il attendront
 a nos, cissi come devant. Et qui vodra de
 la terre jurt que a totes les devant dites
 choses persivir, il obeira al comandement
 des devant diz xxv. barons, & qu'il nous gre-
 vera ensemble oels a son poer, & nous do-
 nons comunement & franchement congie de
 jurer a chascun qui jurer vodra, & ja ne le
 defendrons a neis un, & toz cels de la terre
 qui de loz bon gre voldront jurer as xxv.
 barons, de destreindre & de greber nos, nos
 les frons jurer oels par nostre commande-
 ment, si com devant est dit.

LXV. Et se alguns des xxv. barons mor-
 ra, o partira de la terre, o sera desforbez en
 aucune maniere qu'il ne puist les choses qui
 sunt devant dites persivir, cil qui seront
 remes des devant dit xxv. barons, eslisent
 un autre en lieu de celui solonc loz esgart,
 que jurera en tel maniere com li autre ont
 fait.

LXVI. Et en totes les choses que li xxv.
 barons debent persivir se paraventure cil
 xxv.

be subject to us as before. And whoever of the realms will, may swear, that for the performance of these things he will obey the commands of the said five and twenty barons, and that, together with them, he will distress us to his power: and we will give public and free leave to swear to all that will swear, and will never hinder any one: and for all persons of the realm, that of their own accord will swear to the said five and twenty barons to distress us, we will issue our precept, commanding them to swear as aforesaid.

AND if any of the said five and twenty barons die, or go out of the realm, or be any way hindered from acting as aforesaid, the residue of the said five and twenty barons shall chuse another in his room, according to their discretion, who shall swear as the others do.

AND as to all things which the said five and twenty barons are to do, if, peradventure, they
be

xxv. seront present, & descozderont entre els d'aucune chose, o aucun de cels qui seront somons ne bodzont, o ne pourront estre present, seït ferm & certain co que la griegnoz partie de cels qui seront present porbera, o recevra ensemen com se tuit i abeient consenti.

LXVII. Et li debant dit xxv. barons jurent que totes les choses qui sunt debant dites, qu'il garderont seement, & feront garder de tot loz poer.

LXVIII. Et nos ne porchacerons dalcun par nos, ne par altrui rien pour quei alguns de ces otriemenz o de cestes franchises seït rapelez o amenuiez, & se aucune tel chose sera pourchacie seït cassee, & veine, & ja nen userons par nos ne par altrui.

LXIX. Et totes males volentes, desdeigz, rancors, qui sont nees entre nos & nos homes clers & lais, deske la descorde, comanca, avons plainement relaissees & pardonees a toz, & estre co toz les trespassemens qui sunt fait par achaison di ceste descorde des la Pasche en la sezain de nostre regne jusqual refozement de la pais, avom plainement

be not all present, or cannot agree, or in case any of those that are summoned cannot or will nor come, whatever shall be determined by the greater number of them that are present, shall be good and valid, as if all had been present.

AND the said five and twenty barons shall swear, that they will faithfully observe all the matters aforesaid, and cause them to be observed to their power.

AND we will not obtain of any one for ourselves, or for any other, any thing whereby any of these concessions, or of these liberties may be revoked or annihilated; and if any such thing be obtained, it shall be null and void, nor shall ever be made use of by ourselves or any other.

AND all ill-will, disdain, and rancour, which has been between us and our subjects of the clergy and laity since the said discord began, we do fully release and pardon to them all. And moreover, all trespasses that have been committed by occasion of the said discord since Easter, in the sixteenth of our reign, to the restoring of the peace, we have fully released to all clerks and laymen;
and

plainement relaissie a toz clers, et a lais et quant a nos apoztient loz abon plainement pardone et otreie di co loz abon fait faire lettres de tesmoign overtes de seignoz Stefne Parceveske de Cantorbire, de seignoz Henri Parceveske de Dibeline, et des devant diz evesques, et de maistre Pandolf loz ceste seurte et ces otreiemenz, poz la que chose nos volons et comandons fermement que leglise d'Angleterre soit franche, et que li home en nostre regne aient et tiegnent totes les devant dites franchises, et les veitures, et les otreiemenz bien et en pais franchement et quittement, plainement et entierement a els, et loz eirs en totes choses, et en toz leus, a tozjoz li coin devant est dit. Et si fu jure de nostre part, et de la part des barons que totes choses qui dessus sunt escriptes, seront gardees a bone fei sanz malengin. Tesmoig en sont cil qui sunt devant dit, et mult altre.

LXX. Ceste chartre fu donee el pze est appelez Robeninkmede entre Wineslores et Stanes, le quinzain joz de juig l'an de nostre regne dis et sept ans.

IDA

and so far as in us lies we have fully pardoned them: And further, we have caused letters patent to be made to them in testimony hereof, witnessed by STEPHEN, archbishop of Canterbury, HENRY, archbishop of Dublin, and by the aforesaid bishops, and by Mr. PANDULPHUS, upon this security and these concessions. Whereby, we will and strictly command, that the church of England be free, and enjoy all the said liberties, and rights, and grants, well and in peace, freely and quietly, fully and entirely to them and their heirs, in all things, in all places, and for ever as aforesaid. And we and our barons have sworn that all things above written, shall be kept on our parts, in good faith, without ill design. The witnesses are the persons above-named and many others.

THIS charter was given at the meadow called Running-Mead, betwixt Windsor and Stanes, the fifteenth day of June, in the seventeenth year of our reign.

H h JOHN,

ID A N par la grace de Deu Reis d'Engleterre as visconte de Suthantesire, et a dolce esleuz en tel conte a enquerre et offer les malveises costumes des viscontes et de loz ministres des foies et des forestiers, et des warentnes, et des warrenniers, et des riviers, et de loz gardes, saluz. Nos vos mandons que senz delai saisissez en nostre main les terres, et les tenemenz, et les chatels de toz celz del conte de Suthantesire qui ne vodront jurer as xxv. barons solonc la forme qui est escripte en nostre chartre des franchises, o a celz quil auront a co atornez; & s'il ne volent jurer maintenant empres quince joz accompliz, puisque loz terres & loz tenemen, & loz chatel seront seisi en nostre main : faites vendre toz loz chatelz, & les deniers qui en seront pris gardez saubement, a metre en laie de la sainte terre de Jerusalem; & loz terres & loz tenemenz tenez en nostre main jusqu'il aient jure, & co su pourvieu par le jugement l'arceveske Stefne de Cantorbire & des barons de nostre regne. Et en tesmoig de ceste chose nos enveons cestes nos lettres overttes. Tesmoig mei meisme. A Odisbaam le vint & septain joz de Juig, lan de nostre regne dis & septain.

JOHN, by the grace of God, King of England, to the sheriff of Hampshire, and to the twelve that are chosen in that county, to enquire of, and put away, the evil customs of the sheriffs, and of their ministers, of forests and foresters, of warrens and warrenners, of rivers, and of guarding them, greeting. We command you, that without delay, you seize into our hand, the lands and tenements, and the goods of all those of the county of Southampton, that will not swear to the said five and twenty barons, according to the form expressed in our charter of liberties, or to such as they shall have thereunto appointed; and if they will not swear presently, at the end of fifteen days after their lands, and tenements, and chattels are seized into our hands, that ye sell all their goods, and keep safely the money that ye shall receive for the same, to be employed for the relief of the holy land of Jerusalem; and that ye keep their lands and tenements in our hands till they have sworn, or that STEPHEN, archbishop of Canterbury, and the barons of our kingdom have given judgment thereupon. In witness whereof, we direct unto you these our letters patent. Witness ourself: at Odibaam, the seven and twentieth day of June, in the seventeenth year of our reign.

AN
ESSAY
ON
PARLIAMENTS.

C H A P. I.

Shewing that the frequent meeting of parliaments is the basis of our constitution, and the true of the government; and that the intermission of them is inconsistent with the body of the English law.

IF a man would have an entire view of the English constitution, he must have recourse to those able and approved authors who have written purposely on that subject. For it is a rule, *Parva est autoritas aliud agentis*; and what is said by the by, is of less weight, than what is professedly handled; provided it have been maturely

turely considered, by a competent judge of that matter which he treats. And in this kind we do not find a man better qualified than the learned lord chancellor FORTESCUE, who was an aged lawyer, and had been lord chief justice of England when he wrote his book *De laudibus Legum Angliæ*, which was on purpose in a dialogue with the prince of Wales, to inform him of the nature of the English constitution, and to let him know by what sort of laws the realm, in which he was to succeed his father, was to be governed. And therefore he adjures him over and over again to addict himself to the understanding of the laws of his father's realm, wherein he was to succeed; and having shewn the prince the different nature of realms, where a King could tyrannize, and where he could not, being restrained by politic laws. Rejoice therefore, says he, most excellent prince! and be glad, That the law of the realm, in which you are succeed, is such, for it shall exhibit and minister to you and your people no small security and comfort.

BUT out of that excellent book which I believe no way warped, (for then it must lean towards the court, partly because of the flattery and officiousness, which are too often found in dialogues
with

with princes, and partly because the author was retained on the crown-side by the greatest office in England) I will confine myself to those passages only which relate to the frequency of parliaments. And the first I meet with is in his 18th chap. concerning the statutes of England *.

“ AND if these statutes fall short of their intended efficacy, though devised with such great solemnity and wisdom of parliament; they may very quickly be reformed, but not without the assent of the commons and peers of the realm, which was their source from the beginning.”

Now I only desire that the word *Concito* may be taken notice of, which is the quickest word that can be imagined, and shews that our parliaments were always at hand; and the whole passage shews for what wise and just reasons they were so.

* *Et si statuta hæc, tanta solemnitate & prudentia edita, efficaciam tantam, quantam conditorum cupiebat intentio, non esse contingant: concito reformari ipsa possunt, at non sine communitatis & procerum regni illius assensu, quali ipsa primitus emanarunt.*

THE next passage is chap. xliii. fol. 129. a *.
 “ Neither do the laws of England allow in law-
 “ suits, frivolous and fruitless delays. And if in
 “ this kingdom, delays in pleas, which are not
 “ to the purpose, should be used, they may, in
 “ every parliament, be cut off. Yea, and all
 “ other laws used in the realm, when they *balt*
 “ or are defective in any point, they may, in
 “ every parliament, be set to rights. Where-
 “ upon it may be rightly concluded, that the
 “ laws of England are the best in the world,
 “ either actually or potentially, since they can
 “ easily be brought into act or being. To the
 “ performance whereof, as often as equity so re-
 “ quires, every King is bound by an oath solemn-
 “ ly taken at the time of receiving his crown.”

* *Neque leges Angliae frivolas & infructuosas permittunt inducias. Et siquæ in regno illo dilationes in placitis minus accommodæ fuerint usitatae, in omni parlamento amputari illae possunt: etiam & omnes leges aliae in regno illo usitatae, cum in aliquo claudicaverint, in omni parlamento poterunt reformari. Quo recte concludi potest, quod omnes leges regni illius optimæ sunt in actu vel potentiâ, quo faciliter in actum duci poterunt & in essentiam realem. Ad quod faciendum, quoties aequitas id poposcerit, singuli Reges ibidem sacramento astringuntur, solemniter praestito tempore receptionis diadematis sui.*

OUT

OUT of this last passage I will not trouble you with any more observations than these :

FIRST, That parliaments are the remedy against delays in law proceedings; but how, if parliaments themselves should be delayed?

SECONDLY, That if any or all our laws should halt, and our parliaments, at the same time, should be crippled too, and not be able to come together; they could not help one another.

IN the next and last chapter of that book, fol. 129. b. the prince immediately replies * :

“ My lord chancellor, by the tenour of your
“ discourse in this dialogue I am thoroughly
“ satisfied, That the laws of England are
“ not only good, but the best in the world.

* Princeps. *Leges illas, nedum bonas sed & optimas esse cancellarie, ex prosecutione tua in hoc dialogo certissime deprehendi. Et si quae ex illis meliorari depossant, id citissime fieri posse parliamentorum ibidem formulae nos erudiunt. Quo realiter, potentialiterve, regnum illud semper praestantissimis legibus gubernatur. Nec tuas in hac concionatione doctrinas futuris Angliae regibus inutiles fore conjicio; dum non delebant regere legibus quae non delebant.*

“ And in case any of the laws want to be mended or improved, the rules of the English parliaments do instruct us, That that may be done forthwith. Whereupon, the realm of England is always governed by the very best laws, either in reality or in possibility. And besides, I conjecture that the doctrines that have been held forth in this dialogue, will be very useful to the Kings of England that shall come hereafter; since no body likes to govern by laws which they do not like.”

AFTER all these lauds and praises of English laws, which the chancellor has stuck all over with stars quite through his book, and has made their perfection to centre in this, that they either are or soon may be, the best in the world; because, in case they labour under any defect, that fault may be immediately amended by a wise senate: What if that wise senate be no where to be found, or is at no certainty? It is then impossible to render the chancellor's Latin into English. For the speedy perfection of the English laws, which the prince and he are agreed is concito & citissime, may be rendered, either at the four year's end, or the twelve year's end, or at the world's end. For so I am satisfied it was meant, after
a ten

a ten year's interval of parliaments, if the herb-woman at Edinburgh had not thrown her cricket-stool at the arch bishop's head. And so Dr. HEY-LIN, I remember, does not so much acknowledge that secret as justify it. It is in his little book of observations upon HAMMOND L'ESTRANGE's history of the reign of K. CHARLES I. Says HAMMOND, Upon the dissolution of that wise parliament in 1628 (to whom we owe the petition of right) all wise men concluded that there was an end of all parliaments. Yes, says HEY-LIN, so they might well, the King having been troubled with their impertinences, and having an example in France before his eyes, where parliaments have been so much discontinued, that it is become a proverb amongst them, *Voyons le Jeu de Trois Esbats*, as the strangest fight which can be seen in an age. I have not the book now by me, but I will be answerable for the substance of this quotation, having retained this passage in my head above these five and twenty years.

I CAN only touch several other arguments which might be enlarged upon. The high court of parliament is the dernier ressort in this kingdom; and if that fail, there may be a failure of the English justice.

BRACTON says of an ambiguous or difficult cause, *Respectuetur ad magnam curiam*; but unless parliaments be frequent, such a cause is adjourned to a long day.

EVERY body that understands the English constitution, knows that it is exactly the same as it was laid down in parliament 8 EDWARD IV. by the lord chancellor that then was. You have it in SIR ROBERT COTTON's abridgment of the Rolls in the Tower, p. 682. in these words: "He then
"declared the three estates to comprehend the
"governance of this land, the preheminance
"whereof, was to the King as chief, the second
"to the lords and bishops, and the third to the
"commons." Now if we are at a loss or uncertainty about our parliaments, we are at a loss or uncertainty about two thirds of our government.

BUT I will say no more upon this head, intending to shew in the following chapters, how the matter of parliaments stood in former ages.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Shewing how Parliaments stood in King ALFRED'S time, and afterwards.

I CHUSE to begin with this period of time of K. ALFRED'S reign, because we have clear law and history to shew how parliaments stood in his time, and what law was ordained concerning them for ever.

It is in the Mirror of Justice, which, as my lord COKE says in his preface to his tenth reports, was written in the Saxon times, and it appears by the book itself: but several things were added to it by a learned and wise lawyer ANDREW HORNE, who lived in the reign of EDWARD I. and EDWARD II. antiquity enough for a book, we desire no more; for we are sure that no commonwealthsman had the penning of it*.

* The words of the Mirror are these, p. 10. *Pur le estiate del royalme fist le Roy Alfred assembler les comitees, & ordeigne pur usage perpetuelle, que a deux foits per l'an ou pluis souvent, par mestier, en tempts de peace se assembleront o Londres pur parliamenter sur le guidement del people de Dieu, comment gents se garderent de peche, biverent en quiet, & recieverent droit per*
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 " FOR

For the good estate of the realm, King ALFRED caused the counties to assemble, and ordained it for a perpetual usage, that at two times yearly, or oftener if need were, in time of peace, they should assemble at London, to sit in parliament, for the guidance of God's people, how the nation should keep themselves from sin, live in quiet, and receive right by certain usages and holy judgments. By this estate were made many ordinances by several Kings, down to the King that is now; (which, says the margin, was EDWARD the first) which ordinances are disused by some that are not so wise, and for want that they are not put into writing and published in certain."

In this passage the two times a year seem to be stationary; the calling a parliament oftener than two times a year, *if need were*, is plainly intended for contingencies of state, and when the *ardua regni*, or extraordinary affairs of the nation required an extraordinary parliament. I say, and will make it out to all the world, by laws and declarations

certaines usages & saints judgements. Per celestate se fierent plusieurs ordinances per plusieurs Royes j'esque al ore Roy; Les quelle ordinances sont disuses per meins sages, & par default que elles ne sont my mise en escript & publies en certaine.

of parliament, that the King has a power of calling parliaments within the law; but I never did, nor ever will say to the end of my life, that the King can hinder parliaments appointed by law. These frequent parliaments were to meet at London in time of peace. We see then what has interrupted our parliaments both as to time and place. For London was after in the hands of the Dane, and foreigners' wars and tribulations came on.

BUT the best way is to let an author explain himself; which the Mirror does, in telling us likewise the abusions of the law, or the contrarieties and repugnances to right; or, as he calls it, the fraud and force which is put upon law. This way of writing law is the best that can be invented; for it is the way of preaching by positive and negative, which is a two edged sword, and cuts both ways. And the truth of it is, the negative part of the law, which lies in a little compass, oftentimes teaches us a world of the positive. For instance, the 33 articles in the roll, 1 HENRY IV. m. 20. which K. RICHARD II. solemnly acknowledged of his own maladministration, do give us more light into

into the constitution, than a book of six times the bigacts could do.

BUT to come to the abusions of law which are in the Mirror, p. 282. he says, That the first and sovereign abusion, is for the King to be beyond the law, whereas he ought to be subject to it, as is contained in his oath: though the second is my business, which is in these words*:

“ THE second abusion of the law is, that
 “ whereas parliaments ought to convene for the
 “ salvation of the souls of trespassers, and this at
 “ London, and two times in the year, now a-days
 “ they meet but seldom, and at the will of the
 “ King for aids and gatherings of treasure: and

* Second abusion est, que ou les parlements se duissent faire pour le salvation des almes de trespassors, & ceo a Londres & deux-foits per an, la ne se font ils forsque rarement, & a la volunt le Roy pour aides & cuilets de tresore. Et ou les ordinances duissent faire al common assent del Roy & de ses counties la le se font ore per le Roy & ses clerkes; & per aliens & autres que nosent contravener le Roy; eins desirent de luy plaire; & de luy counsiller a son profit, tout ne soit my le conseil convenable al common del peuple, sans appeller les counties, & sans ensuer le rules de droit, & dount plusors ordinances se fount ore plus sur volunt, que sur droit.

whereas

“ whereas ordinances ought to be made by the
 “ common assent of the King and his coun-
 “ ties, now they are made by the King and
 “ his clerks, and by aliens and others that
 “ dare not contradict the King, but desire to
 “ please him, and to counsel him for his own
 “ profit, though it be not counsel which is con-
 “ venient for the commons of the people,
 “ without applying to the counties, and without
 “ following the rules of right: whereupon there
 “ are several of the present ordinances that are
 “ rather founded upon will, that upon right.”

FROM this passage I shall only observe, that the place of a parliament's meeting is fixed, and still at London; and that the two times a year was standing law down to K. EDWARD I. though abuses and court-practices had broken in upon the law.

Now let us see how the law stood afterwards; wherein I can only consult the books I have by me, for I have not health enough to go and transcribe the records in the Tower, but take them upon content as they lie in Sir ROBERT COTTON'S abridgement of the records in the Tower. And, there in the very first page, 5 ED-

WARD II. it is ordained, *Que parliament ferra venus un ou deux foits per an.* That a Parliament shall be held one time or two times a year. Here you see the twice a year is dwindled into *once or twice.*

THE next is p. 93. of the same book, 36 EDWARD III. "The print touching the yearly holding of a parliament, cap. X. agreeth with the record." Now the print is, "Item, For maintenance of the said articles and statutes, and redress of divers mischiefs which daily happen, a parliament shall be holden every year, as another time was ordained by statute."

Now that statute, as I find by the statute-book, for I cannot find it in Sir ROBERT COTTON, is thus, 4 EDWARD III. cap. 14. "Item, It is accorded, that a parliament shall be holden every year once, and more often if need be."

By the reason given in 36 EDWARD III. cap. X. just now recited, for a yearly parliament, one would think it should be a daily parliament; because it is for the maintenance of former statutes, and redress of divers mischiefs which daily happen: but I believe that a parliament which fits
but

but forty days in the year are able to do that work; concerning which we will inquire further afterwards.

IN 50 EDWARD III. p. 138. The parliament's demand or petition is this, "That a parliament may be holden every year; the knights of the parliament may be chosen by the whole counties; and that the sheriff may likewise be without brokage in court."

THE King's answer is this, "To the parliament, there are statutes made therefore; to the sheriffs there is answer made; to the knights it is agreed, that they shall be chosen by common consent of every county."

AFTER these three laws in the time of EDWARD III. we come to the first of King RICHARD the second, p. 163. where the petition or demand for a yearly parliament is this: "That a parliament may be yearly holden in convenient place, to redress delays in suits, and to end such cases as the judges doubt of."

THE King's answer is: "It shall be as it hath been used."

IN 2 RICHARD II. p. 173. by the King's commandment one cause of opening the parliament is declared to be this: " Secondly, for that it was
" enacted that a parliament should yearly be hold.
" en."

NAV, if the court insist upon a yearly parliament, the country may and ought.

THUS stood the law of England till 16 CAROL I. when that King having discontinued parliaments for twelve years and created a distrust of him in the breasts of his people, which was just; (for if a prince spoil the government for twelve years together, who shall trust him in the thirteenth?) the nation found a necessity of having a cautionary parliament every third year, to secure their annual parliaments for the two years immediately foregoing. This is the true reason of the act for a triennial parliament, which was a perfect innovation both name and thing. For I challenge any antiquary, lawyer, or person whatsoever that has turned over books, to shew me the word triennial joined to the word parliament, from the foundation of this government till the year 1640. A triennial parliament therefore is so far from being
the

the constitution of this government, that if it were so, the constitution is not so antient as has been supposed, but first drew its breath under CHARLES I. But as I said before, that act was only a cautionary act, as a town or gate of a city is taken in caution, for performance of articles. This appears by the first thing which is enacted in that law, namely, *That the laws for a parliament to be holden at least once a year, shall hereafter be duly kept and observed.* SCOBEL's collect. 16 Car. I. cap. i.

THIS act was gently drawn up, and had more of a prospect than a retrospect, and does not look back into those oppressions which King CHARLES himself in his large declaration of August the 12th does acknowledge were insupportable; which were wholly owing to this long intermission of parliaments: but it wisely provides, that in case the two first years parliaments should fail, then came a peremptory parliament, which the King and keeper might call if they pleased; but if they did not, the counties and boroughs of England were forced to send,

AFTER this comes the act 16 CAR. II. cap. i. and repeals this triennial act, because they say,
It

“ It is in derogation of his majesty’s just rights
 “ and prerogative, inherent to the imperial crown
 “ of this realm, for the calling and assembling of
 “ parliaments;” whereupon the triennial act is annulled as if it had never been made.

I wish it had never been made: but we will stop there first. It is annulled as if it had never been made. There is nothing lost by that; for then our parliaments are where they were, which was due annual.

WELL, now let us see what alteration is made by this new act, 16 CAR. II. which follows in these words, sect. 3. “ And because by the antient laws and statutes of this realm, made in the reign of King EDWARD III*, parliaments are to be held very often (that is, one or twice a year) therefore they shall not be discontinued above three years at the most.” I do not use to admire consequences which I do not understand. But, under favour, I would be taken right. I say, that the recital of the antient laws of this realm does not repeal them, disannul them, *anneantir*,

* 4 Edward III. cap. XIV. 36 Edward III. cap. X.

any thing, nothing; when there is not one *repeal-*
ing word concerning them in that statute.

I KNEW what I said when I wished the triennial bill of 1640 had never been made; and it must be remembered that that act is as if it had never been made; for it gave occasion to some men that came in with the deluge of the restoration, when it rained cavaliers (though I value all mens rights more than my own, and princes most because they are biggest) and it prompted them to think of turning a cautionary triennial, into a discretionary. But, God be thanked! they wanted words to express themselves; and if they meant it, they have not done it.

BUT so as they did put the act together, and as it now stands, there are several things in it worth observing. 1st. That *if there be occasion there shall be more and oftener* parliaments than once in three years. Now I ask for whose sake was that clause enacted? Not for the King's, for he was always enabled by his prerogative, for the sake of the *ardua regni*, to call a parliament every month in the year. Well then, it was for the sake of his people, that if they judged *there was occasion for*
more

more or oftener parliaments, they might ask for them. For I appeal to common sense, whether it be not ridiculous, and wonderfully beneath the dignity of a parliament, when a prince was bound by his coronation-oath to call a parliament once a year, or oftener if need were (for so the law stood, and so this prince was at that time bound) to interpret a law after such a manner, as to say he was enabled to call a parliament oftener than once in three years.

So much for that point ; the next is this. The upshot of this act of parliament, and the conclusion of the whole act is in these words: “ To the end
“ there may be a frequent calling, assembling,
“ and holding of parliaments once in three years
“ at the least.” I do say, that if ever we came to low-water mark in our laws about parliaments, and if ever they run dregs, it was in the time of King CHARLES II. And yet it was enacted, and was the end of that law, that one should be called once in three years at the least. Now I leave it to the lawyers to tell, whether a proclamation can call a parliament, or any thing else besides a writ of summons and a writ for elections.

AND

AND thus have I run through the law of parliaments till the other day, and considered what is the law at present. From K. ALFRED's time down to EDWARD I. it seems to have been the standing law to have parliaments twice a year. I know that the invasions of several nations, both Danes and Normans, and the revolutions and disturbances of state which happen, must needs cause frequent interruptions in the practice of it. But my reason to be of that opinion is this, because HORNE, who lived in those times, says that parliaments at that time ought to meet twice a year, and that at London; and that the intermitting of parliaments was the greatest abusion of the law but one: though I think I have still a greater authority than HORNE's (if any thing in this world can be bigger than that of an able and an honest man) but it is a King, in his letter to the pope; it is in the clause rolls anno 3 EDWARD I. m. 9. *scedula*, and is to be seen in PRYNN's large book, p. 158. I will quote no more of it than is for my purpose; it is concerning the yearly tribute of a thousand marks, which the popes from K. JOHN's time claimed, and there were several years due. The pope's nuncio solicits the matter, but the King excuses himself that he had come to no resolution in his Easter parliament, but by common advice he

would give him an answer in his Michaelmas parliament next following. At present I only mind the wording and way of expressing these two parliaments. Concerning the first he says, *In parlamento quod circa octabas resurrectionis Dominicæ celebrari in Anglia consuevit*: "In a parliament that "used to be held in England about the octaves of "Easter." That word *consuevit* amounts to custom and usage, and seems to express a parliament *de more*. He says, that the parliament was in *octabis*, and by occasion of his sickness (after they had made several good laws, and redressed many grievances, but not all that lay before them) for the reason aforesaid, that parliament was dissolved, and the King could not treat with them about the pope's petition of tribute. But he promises to do the pope reason in his Michaelmas parliament which he intended*.

* Now let us see how that is expressed; *Pro firmo scituri, pie pater & domine, quod in alio parlamento nostro quod ad festum sancti Michaelis prox. futur. intendimus, dante Domino, celebrare, habito & communicato consilio cum prelatiis & proceribus memoratis, vobis super præmissis, ipsorum consilio dabimus responsonem.*

"KNOW

“ Know for certain, pious father and lord,
 “ that in another parliament of our’s, which we
 “ intend to hold at Michaelmas next ensuing,
 “ with God’s leave; we, and the prelates, and
 “ peers aforesaid, consulting together, according
 “ to their advice will give you an answer upon the
 “ premises.”

BUT I will say no more upon this head, being
 intent upon another.

CHAP. III.

Shewing that the yearly parliaments were fresh
and fresh.

THERE are several ways of proving that there was a new election every year. They tell me, there are writs extant for new elections four-score years successively, where there are about six wanting. What if they had been all lost, embezzled, or made away? What then, is our constitution lost, when bundles of writs are lost? No, I will go no further than this last letter, to shew that there is a great appearance, that while there were two parliaments in a year, the second must be new called. Though I hate the word new, applied to a parliament; for a parliament is a parliament, and our ancestors would no more have dreamed of a stale or old parliament, than of an old moon cut out into stars. I will cite the words of King EDWARD's letter, dated the 19th of June, in the third of his reign; and when that is done, let the reader make his own judgment upon them.

It was in the interval betwixt his Easter and his Michaelmas parliament. " But before we
" could

“ could put an end to that parliament, because
 “ of the multitude of grievances which lay be-
 “ fore them, your nuncio in the mean time,
 “ diligently solliciting your business, a great di-
 “ stemper, as it pleased God, beset me, which
 “ hindered the finishing of many other matters,
 “ and treating about the petition of the yearly
 “ tribute, which is a great grief to me: and
 “ so by reason of my said illness (from which
 “ by the grace of God, in whose hands are
 “ the issues of life and death, I begin to recover)
 “ that parliament was dissolved, and hereupon
 “ I could not treat with the prelates and peers
 “ aforesaid, about this tribute*.”

* *Set antequam idem parlamento propter negotiorum multitu-
 dinem quæ reformationis remedio indigebant finem imponere va-
 leremus, eodem capellano vestro responsionem debitam sibi fieri in-
 stanter postulante, quadam gravis nos invasit, sicut Domino
 placuit, infirmitas corporalis, quæ perfectionem multorum ali-
 orum negotiorum, & deliberationem petitionis census annui
 supradicti, de quo dolemus non modicum, impedivit; sicque
 cum occasione infirmitatis hujusmodi, a qua per Dei gratiam
 cujus est perimere & mederi, incepimus convalescere, idem par-
 liamentum fuerit dissolutum, & super hoc nequiverimus super
 petitione census ejusdem deliberationem habere cum praelatis &
 proceribus antedictis.*

FROM

FROM this long quotation, I shall only make this observation at present, That in this parliament begun in the octaves of Easter [perhaps upon May-day] there was a great deal of business done, and a great deal of business left undone; amongst the rest the pope's, because of the King's sickness, who thereupon could not give answers to bills or petitions; and that the nuncio's petition was unanswered went to the King's heart. But upon occasion of that sickness it was, that the parliament was dissolved, and the pope's business hindered, to the King's great regret. What, could not the King keep his parliament alive till the nineteenth of June, when he himself began to be well again, which is the date of the letter? It is no more than fifty days from their first sitting down to the date of his letter; and yet, though he set his heart upon the business that lay before that parliament, it was dissolved; and to stop this gap, he promises to call another parliament at Michaelmas. Then it seems they did not understand the method of prorogations, and it is unknown to me by what law it came in. If there be such a law, I never minded it; for I am speaking of the constitution, and not of innovations.

BUT

BUT I believe the true reason of the abrupt dissolution of that summer parliament, in conjunction with the King's sickness, was this, That if they had been held till Michaelmas, though there was then to be another parliament, it must have been at the King's charge. For I am of opinion, by what I have seen even as low as RICHARD the second's time, that the sitting of a parliament was usually forty Days; and that the quarantain was not duly kept in this parliament, 3 EDWARD I. of the octaves of Easter. But there was a concern in holding a parliament above forty days about the knights' and burgesse's wages; as appears by that memorable record which is in KNYGHTON, p. 2682. being the message sent by both houses to King RICHARD the second at Eltham*.

IN short, they say they have an antient statute for it, that in case the King wilfully absent him-

* The words are these: *Dicunt etiam quod habent ex antiquo statuto, quod si Rex a parlamento suo se alienaverit sua sponte, non aliqua infirmitate aut aliqua alia de causa necessitatis, sed per immoderatam voluntatem proterve se subtraxerit per absentiam temporis 40 dierum, tanquam de vexatione populi sui & gravibus expensis eorum non curans, extunc licitum omnibus & singulis eorum absque domigerio Regis redire ad propria & unicuique eorum in patriam suam remeare.*

self, and will not come to parliament, as having no care of vexing his people, nor regard of their great expences, after forty days they are free to go home, and the King has no wrong done him.

Now what is the meaning of these forty days, but that they had waited a just session? And how should the parliament-mens' wages be otherwise adjusted, when at the end of every parliament in those times they were dismissed, with desiring them to sue out their writs for their wages? And I leave it to the antiquaries, because I am not now able to travel in that point, to consider how the several proportions of land which are allotted for the knights and burgessees in several counties for their wages, can be adjusted without a certainty of the length of their sessions.

BUT not a word of this is my present business, which was to shew, that parliaments by the constitution are not to be stale; as in a former reign one was retained about nineteen years with pensions, and another for fewer years, with places and turning out of places: but if a parliament were corrupted neither of these ways, yet a standing parliament will always stagnate, and be like a country-pond which is over-grown with
ducks

ducks-meat. The worst King, or at least, one of them that ever the nation had, was so limited by the constitution, that he did not know how to compass a long parliament, and therefore he was fain to take other indirect ways to gain the same point as if he had one. It was RICHARD the second; who, in the articles alledged against him, and confessed by him, lets us know it was by influencing elections and false returns. The words as they stand in the rolls, 1 HENRY IV. m. 20. are these*:

* 19 Item, *Licet de statuto, & consuetudine regni sui in convocatione cujuslibet parliamenti populus suus in singulis comitatibus regni debeat esse liber ad eligendum & deputandum milites pro hujusmodi comitatibus ad interessendum parlamento, & ad exponendum eorum gravamina, & ad proseguendum pro remediis superinde prout eis videretur expedire; tamen prefatus Rex ut in parliamentis suis liberius consequi valeat sua temeraria voluntatis effectum, direxit mandata sua frequentius vicecomitibus suis, ut certas personas per ipsum Regem nominatas ut milites comitatum venire faciant ad parlamenta sua, quos quidem milites eidem Regi faventes inducere poterat, prout frequentius fecit, quandoque per minas varias, & terrores, & quandoque per munera ad consentiendum illis qua Regno fuerant prejudicialia, & populo quamplurimum onerosa; & specialiter ad concedendum idem Regi subsidium lanarum ad terminum vita sua, & aliud subsidium ad certos annos, suum populum nimium opprimendo.*

M m

“ 19. Item.

“ 19. *Item*, Although by statute, and the custom of his realm in the calling of every parliament in every the counties of England, his people ought to be free to chuse and depute knights for the said counties to be present in parliament, and to lay open their grievances, and to prosecute for remedies thereupon as they think fit; notwithstanding, the said King, that in his parliaments he might obtain his will which was rash, often directed his mandates to his sheriffs, that they should return certain persons nominated by the King himself as knights of the shires; which knights indeed he could make pliable to him, and as he very often did, sometimes by various threats and terrors, and sometimes by gifts, to consent to those things which were prejudicial to the realm, and extremely burdensome to the people; and particularly to grant the same King the subsidy of wool during his life, and another subsidy for certain years, thereby too much oppressing his people.”

Now if he could have made long parliaments, he need not have made use of these mean shifts. But he could make use of no other way, because parliaments, as I said, were fresh and fresh,
and

and antiquity knew no other. And if any man can make out of this authentic record, that it was any otherwise, *than so many parliaments, so many elections*, then I have done with writing and reading.

CHAP. IV.

Of the kalends of May.

AT last I am come to search after the head of Nile, and the true old land-mark of the English Constitution. How parliaments stood in the British times I am not certain; but that there were parliaments then I am certain. I have it from the wise GILDAS, that VORTIGERN and his foolish thaynes sent to the Saxons for help against the Picts and Scots, and took into their bosoms a warlike and fierce nation, whom at a distance they were afraid of. And they indeed of course beat those that infested Severus's wall, but they made mine hosts that invited them in, hewers of wood and drawers of water. And those of the Britons that opposed them, the Saxons drove out of their country, whereby, as GILDAS says, all their records were lost. But out of that venerable author we plainly see, that the lamentable letter, which was sent some few years before to the senate of Rome, was written by a British parliament. For whose sake I beg of all nations not to let in legions of foreign nations to be their masters; for when they want them
and

and their protection most, they shall go without it. For when the Roman legions were withdrawn out of Britain (which caused our enemies to make an insult) and the British parliament begged hard to have them return, the Roman senate's answer was, that they were otherwise engaged; and they must help themselves as they could, which made them betake themselves to the Saxons. A very fair answer to a nation that was disabled and disarmed, after their Kings and parliaments had been only tax-gatherers to the Romans for several hundreds of years; as, if you have no true Lord Mayor, you must still have pageants, and somewhat that keeps up the show.

BUT after these early times, we have somewhat in King EDWARD the Confessor's laws, which all succeeding Kings have been sworn to, which I will try what to make of. It is a yearly folk-mote upon the kalends of May. I do not know readily what that yearly folkmote is, because those laws of EDWARD the Confessor say that King ARTHUR invented it; *Quod Arthurus Rex inclitus Britonum invenit*. Then I am sure the original name of it was not folkmote. So we will mind the name no more, but come to the thing.

SIR

SIR HENRY SPELMAN, in the most learned glossary that ever was written, I will not except Mr. SOMNER's, says thus under the word *Gemotum* * ;
 “ A wittenagemote was the same thing amongst the
 “ English Saxons, as now at this day a parliament is amongst us ; and a wittenagemote differed little from a folkmote, only that this last
 “ was annual, and chiefly sat about the standing
 “ affairs of the nation.” The other was called at the King's pleasure upon emergencies of state, and for the sake of making laws.

Now let us see what the learned antiquary says concerning folkmites by themselves in the same place, p. 315. † “ In a folkmote once every year

* *Wittenagemot idem apud Anglosaxones quod apud nos hodie parlamentum, paramque a Folcmoto differebat, nisi quod hoc annuum esset & e certis plerumque causis, illud ex arduis contingentibus & legum condendarum gratia, ad arbitrium principis indictum.*

† *In Folcmoto semel quotannis sub initio kalendarum Maii (tanquam in annuo parlamento) convenere Regni principes, tam episcopi quam magistratus liberique homines. Jurantur laici; omnes coram episcopis in mutuum fœdus, in fidelitatem Regis, & in jura regni conservanda. Consulitur de communi salute, de pace, de bello, & de utilitate publica promovenda.*

“ at

“ at the beginning of the kalends of May (as in
 “ a yearly parliament) there met together the
 “ princes of the realm, as well bishops as magi-
 “ strates, and the freemen. All the laymen are
 “ sworn in the presence of the bishops into a mu-
 “ tual covenant with one another, into their feal-
 “ ty to the King, and to preserve the rights of the
 “ kingdom. They consult of the common safety,
 “ of peace, of war, and of promoting the public
 “ profit.”

It follows in the next words*, “ Besides, a
 “ Folkmote is used in every sudden danger, and
 “ likewise if necessity require it, under the alder-
 “ man (that is, the earl) of every county.”

THIS last is plainly a provincial Folkmote in
 time of necessity: but the former part of the sen-
 tence seems to intimate, that upon a surprize,
 when the King had not time to call a parliament,
 the last Folkmote met; as the last Westminster
 parliament did, to give the prince of Orange the

* *Adhibetur præterea Folcmotum in repentino omni discrimine, exigente etiam necessitate, sub aldermanno (hoc est, comite) cujuslibet comitatus.*

administration,

administration, before it was possible to have a parliament elected.

THOUGH the former description of the general and not the provincial Folkmote is our present business. And at first sight it looks like a full parliament, for it consists of the *princes, as well bishops as magistrates, and the freemen*; that is to say, the chiefs of the whole nation. And they are employed in parliament work, for *they consult of the common safety, of peace, of war, and promoting the public profit*. And did not the general title of our laws every session run thus; To the high honour of God, and to the profit of the commonwealth? If ever there were wites in parliament, sure they were *princes, as well bishops as magistrates, and the freemen*. Why then does this learned knight distinguish betwixt a Wittenagemote and a Folkmote, seeing they were both made up of wites? I am governed by things and not by words, and am thoroughly satisfied that an assembly which does parliament business is a parliament. And no doubt the Folkmote made laws; for it is not to be supposed that an assembly of the whole nation should sit consulting forty days of peace and war, of armies and fleets (which in those days were three thousand ships, and were able to make out the

the dominion of the seas) of the grievances of the nation, and the redress of those grievances; and of providing for the common profit of the realm; and after all not be able to enact their own conclusions. That is just as if our present parliament should spend forty days in finding out ways and means for the raising money, and afterwards were not able to put them into a law: or as we private men use to consult, and debate, and settle the nation over a dish of coffee, without being able to oblige one single man to obey our orders.

THE thing which misled the great antiquary (as I conjecture) to make this mark of difference betwixt a Folkmote and a Wittenagemote, as if a Wittenagemote made laws, and a Folkmote not, is this; That when the Saxon Kings issued out their laws, they said they had passed in their Wittenagemote, *concilio sapientum*, or council of wise men: and it was proper for the King to call his Folkmote by that name, though not for them themselves. As for instance, the writs of election at this day call for some of the discreetest to be chosen to parliament, though the members do not assume that title: and I know so much of the old English genius, that they would no more have called themselves a Wittenagemote, than

this present parliament would call their votes, which come out day by day, *Journal des Scavans*.

BUT I will wave conjectures, even in antiquities, (though we are there oftentimes forced to go in the dark, to tread upon ruins, and to feel out our way;) because I have direct proof that the Folkmote made all the laws we ever had. And for this I will go no further than to the third branch of the usual and accustomed coronation-oath, taken by the former Kings of England, and taken twice by RICHARD II*.

“ Do you grant that the just laws and customs,
 “ which are of the Folks chusing, shall be kept,
 “ and do you promise that they shall be pro-
 “ tected, and, to the honour of God, receive af-
 “ firmance by you, to the utmost of your power?
 “ The King shall answer, I grant and promise.”

* 1 Hen. IV. membr. 20 inter Decem Scriptores, p. 2746. In these words, spoken to the King by way of question. *Concedis justas leges & consuetudines esse tenendas; & promittis per te esse protegendas & ad honorem Dei corroborandas quas Vulgus elegerit secundum viros tuas? Respondebit, Concedo & promitto.*

Now

Now I would fain know how a Folkmote can be otherwise exprest in Latin than by the word *Vulgus*, which is a collective word: or how the *Vulgus* or Folk could chuse laws any otherwise than in a Folkmote?

I WILL not enter into the stiff dispute which exercised K. CHARLES I. and his parliaments for a long time, whether the word was *præter sensu*, or *future*, and whether the word was best rendered in the French translations, the laws which the Folk *auront esleu*, shall have chosen, or which the Folk *eslieront* shall hereafter chuse; whereupon they said, that he was bound to sign and affirm all the laws they should hereafter present to him, and that he could not make use of a negative without perjury. I say, that that whole dispute was not worth a farthing. For if the Folk chose the laws all along down to King RICHARD the second's time, and the Kings were sworn to affirm them, then we know how the laws antiently were made; and who cares whether *eslieront*, or chusing for the future, be the sense of the word or no? For if the Folks chusing was the constitution in King RICHARD the second's time, then I would fain know in what King's reign it was afterwards, that the constitution was altered.

IN short, the Folk chose the laws; and I believe the English Folkmote and Wittenagemote will be found to be old HOMER's river,

Ὁν Ξάνθον καλέουσι θεοί, θνητοὶ δὲ Σκαμάνδεσσι,

which the gods call Xanthus, but mortal men call Scamander. Now, though Scamander be the homelier name, yet it is the same river.

I CANNOT but say there was some difference betwixt the Folkmote upon the kalends of May, and the Folkmotes which the King always called for his *ardua contingentia*, or contingencies of state: but the difference lay only in this, that the Folkmote of the kalends of May was a parliament *de more*, and of course, who assembled themselves, *sub initio kalendarum Maii*, says SPELMAN, and were bound to do so, *in capite kal. Maii*, say the laws of EDWARD the confessor, cap. xxxv. *de greve*; (and out of that chapter has Sir HENRY SPELMAN extracted his true account of a general Folkmote, which was anniversary :) whereas, a Wittenagemote or extraordinary parliament or Folkmote was summoned at the King's pleasure, and was ever at his call both for time and place. Other difference I can find none. For as for the constituent parts of a Folkmote, if *the princes of the realm*,

realm, as well bishops as magistrates, and the free-men, cannot denominate a Wittenagemote, I know not where the King will find his wits, or wise-men. I have spoken to that point already. I have likewise spoken to the point of the Folk-motes making of laws. We find, indeed, the Saxon Kings in the preface to their laws which were made in extraordinary parliaments, decreeing with their wites, (*mid minan wite*) some at Greatanlage, and at Midwinter, afterwards at Eaxcester, as King ATHELSTAN; some at Lundenbrig, at the holy Easterly tide, as King EDMUND; others at Wodestock in Mercialand, and others at Winchester. Whereby it appears that the Kings of England had a power to summon parliaments when and where their weighty affairs required them, in all places of the realm, and at all seasons of the year. This is an undoubted prerogative lodged in the King for the sake of the ardua contingentia; and no man would govern a kingdom that could not command the advice and assistance of his subjects to be forth-coming, when the occasions of the kingdom required it. And for the sake of these ardua negotia, the knights, citizens, and burgeses are to be impowered to act in parliament-business by those that sent them; lest, for want of that full and sufficient

cient power, or by means of an improvident election, these arduous and weighty affairs of the kingdom should, in any wise, remain infecta, or be left undone. This is contained in the present writ of elections directed to every sheriff of a county at every election of parliament-men.

BUT that is not my present business; for I am in a further search after the annual, or rather the anniversary Folkmote.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

Concerning the first Founder of the Yearly Folkmote of the Kalends of May.

BEFORE I proceed any further, I must clear one point: and that is, that we find the author and founder of our yearly Folkmote mentioned in the laws of EDWARD the Confessor, (which were recited and confirmed by K. WILLIAM I.) under the title *de greve*, chap. xxxv. which may possibly leave a suspicion, that this yearly Folkmote of the Kalends of May was a greve's court. Now what court should this be belonging to a greve, or any count or viscount, or president whatsoever; for greve is an ambiguous word? It is not a Burghmote, for that is three times a year by the Saxon laws. It is not a county-court; for that, by EDWARD the senior's laws, N. 11. was in these words*: "I will that each greve have a gemot at about four weeks." So that there were twelve in the year. It was not the sheriff's turn, or *le turne del vicount*; for that

* Ic wille þæt ælc gevere hæbbe gemot a ymb þreoþen wican.

was twice a year, *τῶν ῥα ῥαῖν γεμῶν* on *γερ*, by the laws of King EDGAR, cap. v. it is not the *gemot* for the view of weapons or arms, which every freeman in England was charged with, and was bound to shew once every year, and, as was wisely contrived, all in one day throughout all England; but that day was not in our kalends of May, but the morrow after Candlemas, *Crastino Purificationis B. M.* And therefore I cannot, for my life, make any thing else of an universal anniversary full Folkmote, which is but *semel in anno, scilicet in capite kal. Maii*, but a stationary parliament: especially considering who they were, and what they did.

THE next thing to be considered, is the author or founder of this antient constitution, which we have in the afore said chap. *de greve*, num. 35. amongst the laws of good King EDWARD*.

“ THIS law of the anniversary Folkmote AR-
 “ THUR invented, who was heretofore the most
 “ renowned King of the Britons, and thereby he

* *Hanc legem invenit Arthurus, qui quondam fuit inelytissimus Rex Brytonum, & ita consolidavit & confederavit regnum Britanniae universum semper in unum.*

“ consolidated

“ consolidated and confederated together the
 “ whole realm of Britany for ever as one.”

It is good to honour the founders of all useful constitutions; and I believe that King ARTHUR was the inventor of this as to this realm, because these laws of King EDWARD say so: and so was CADMUS, the inventor of letters in Greece, though we can trace them out of Phœnicia; and the letters speak for themselves. For if it be Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth in one place, and in the same order it is Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta in the other place; then we are sure there has been an understanding and communication. For it is impossible to be otherwise, when the alphabets are settled on both sides, by being their numeral letters; as it was plainly in King DAVID's time by the octonaries of the 119th Psalm, as it stands in the middle of the Bible; and as it was in HOMER's time in Greece: or else the old scholiasts have deceived me, who say that HOMER purposely couched the number of all his books in the first words of his Iliads Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ; which numerals stand for 48. The Greeks likewise taught the Welch to tell twenty, and I believe they taught the Romans too. Now by the same rule, if there was a very antient Folknote in the

O o

neighbouring

neighbouring kingdom of France upon every kalends of May, then, perhaps, King ARTHUR borrowed from them; and it is good to look upon their kalends, because it is possible they may give light to our's.

THE French kalends of May lie thus in RADULPHUS DE DICETO, the famous dean of St. Paul's in K. JOHN's time, whose history was thought so authentic, that the English parliament, in EDWARD the first's time, relied upon his testimony, amongst some others, in no less a point than the claim of the King of England to the supreme dominion of the realm of Scotland *.

I WILL render the sense of it into English as near as I can; however, the Latin lies before every man to translate it for himself. " From

* As to our present business, he has these words, *abbreviat. chronicorum*, page 439. *Abhinc Francorum regibus solita fortitudine & scientia degenerantibus, regni potentia disponebatur per majores domus, regibus solo nomine regnantibus; quibus moris erat principari quidem secundum genus, & nil agere vel disponere praeterquam irrationabiliter edere & bibere domique morari, & kal. Maii praesidere coram tota gente & salutari, obsequia & dona accipere & rependere, & sic secum usque ad alium Maium permanere.*

" hence-

“ hence-forward the French Kings degenerating
 “ from the valour and learning which they used
 “ to have, the power of the kingdom was ad-
 “ ministered by the masters of the palace, the
 “ Kings themselves being upon the matter only
 “ titular; whose custom it was to come to the
 “ crown indeed, according to their descent, and
 “ neither to act nor order any thing, but to
 “ eat and drink unconscionably, and to live at
 “ home; and upon the kalends of May to preside
 “ in an assembly of the whole nation, and there
 “ to be addressed, to receive their allegiances,
 “ and aids or benevolences, and to remercy them,
 “ and so to retire to the same life again till another
 “ May came.”

THIS French kalends of May, is so much a
 picture of our's, that I know not which is the
 copy, nor which the original. Their's was an
 assembly of the whole nation, so was our's: an-
 nual and anniversary, so was our's. It was *tota*
gens kal. Maii, in France: our Folkmote looks
 extremely like it in those two strokes; *Statutum est*
enim quod ibi debent populi omnes, & gentes univer-
sæ singulis annis, semel in anno scilicet convenire,
scilicet in capite kal. Maii *. For it was appointed

* L. L. Edw. Conf. cap. 35. de Greve.

by statute, that all the people and counties, universal, should meet together at the Folkmote each year, namely, once in the year, to wit, in the beginning of the kalends of May. The King used to have fine speeches made to him in France; so had we. They swore allegiance to him; so did our Folk. They gave him gifts, (it was not New-year's-tide) aids, benevolences, call them what you will; and our people at the same time, as Sir HENRY SPELMAN said above, *consulted of peace and war*: which cannot be managed without ways and means of raising money, which is the finew of war, as laws are of the peace. The word *rependere* at last in the French kalends looks so like our French form of the royal assent given to a money-bill, *le Roi remercie ses loyal subjects*, that I knew not how to render the word *rependere* any otherwise than I did, by the word *remercie*.

I know that the year 662 was below King ARTHUR's time; but it appears, that when the French government was utterly spoiled in the Merovingian family, as to the other points, still they retained the old custom of the kalends of May; so that it was of much greater standing.

F I N I S.

